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# BYGONE BERKSHIRE.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

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# BYGONE BERKSHIRE

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# Preface.

THE Royal County has many charms for the Antiquary and the Historian, and we trust that "Bygone Berkshire" will not be the least interesting volume of the series which the publisher has so successfully inaugurated. We have attempted to give some glimpses of bygone times and episodes, sketches of the manners and customs of old Berkshire folk, and a few biographical notices of our heroes and learned men. The story of our castles and abbeys shows how many great events in the history of England have been enacted on Berkshire soil, and Windsor, the home of our sovereigns, sheds additional glory on the annals of our ancient county. The editing of this volume has been a task congenial to one who for many years has made Berkshire his home. I desire to express my gratitude to the authors who have so kindly co-operated with me in the preparation of this

volume, and I trust that their labours will meet with the approbation of all who reverence antiquity, and love the traditions of the Royal County.

P. H. Ditchfield.

Barkham Rectory,
*August, 1896.*

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# BYGONE BERKSHIRE.

## Historic Berkshire.

By Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A.

BERKSHIRE has played an important part in the annals of our country, and been the scene of many stirring events in English history. For eight hundred years it has enjoyed the proud distinction of being the Royal County; Windsor Castle, the ancient home of the kings and queens of England, is within its borders, and it has shared the fortunes and misfortunes of the Royal House. Indeed, its proud distinctive title may be traced to a period more remote than that of the building of the Castle by the Plantagenet Kings; Alfred the Great was born in Berkshire, and there were royal palaces in Saxon times at Farringdon and Old Windsor. Here the Confessor King oft resided. Here the Conqueror hunted the tall stags whom he loved "as though

he were their father." Hence from Saxon times to the present day Berkshire has deserved its royal title, and has been pre-eminently the county which kings delight to honour.

The history of Berkshire is indeed the history of England. Successive waves of conquerors passed over our hills and vales, and have left their traces behind them in the names of hamlets, towns, and villages, or in barrows or earthworks. In Celtic times the greater part of Berkshire was held by the powerful family of the Segontiaci; eastern Berkshire was inhabited by the Bibroci; whilst on the south dwelt the Atrebates, a tribe of the Belgæ, mentioned by Cæsar, who migrated into these parts from Gaul and drove the Celts northward. Silchester, the famous Roman city, the Pompeii of England, was their capital before it was captured by the Roman legions; and the walls, which seem to defy the attacks of time, were built along the Atrebatian earthworks. Very numerous are the remains of these ancient inhabitants of Britain in various parts of the county. There are the old roads and trackways, the most important being the Ridgeway, running along the Ilsley Downs, forming part of the

Icknield Street, which connected the east and west of Britain. The road is flanked by fortresses of earth at various places along its course, and barrows mark the burial places of the heroes of their tribes. The chief of these are Letcombe, Uffington, Lowbury, Churn Knob, and Scutchamore Knob. The so-called "King Alfred's Bugle Horn," near Kingston Lisle, a large stone pierced with natural holes, is really a Celtic Memorial. Its trumpet-note can be heard for miles, and was used by the British tribes to summon their scattered bands together when danger threatened. And Wayland Smith's Cave, immortalized by Sir Walter Scott, and supposed to be the burying-place of a Danish chieftain, is probably a British cromlech. In other parts of Berkshire, especially on the high ground between the Thames and Kennett, there are many traces of the ancient inhabitants of our country.

When the tide of Roman conquest flowed over Britain the old inhabitants of our county soon felt its force and yielded to the storm. Their lands then formed part of the Roman province of Britannia Prima. Instead of incessant tribal wars and rude barbaric manners, the conquerors established peace and civilisation. Silchester

became the centre of their rule in this part of the country, and instead of the pit dwellings and rude huts of the natives they erected their stately villas and their forums and bacilicas, the ruins of which, after a burial of many centuries, are now being disinterred. This city lies just beyond the confines of Berkshire, although the Amphitheatre, where Roman gladiators fought, and where, doubtless, as at Rome during the Decian Persecution, Christians were doomed to death, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," is within our borders. Silchester was the centre of our system of Roman roads. Other Roman towns in this district were Spinæ (Speen, near Newbury), Thamesis (probably Streatley), and Bibracte (possibly Wickam Bushes, near Easthampstead). A road ran from Silchester to Pontes (Staines), and another from the same place to Spinæ. Romano-British remains have been found in abundance at Wallingford, Compton, Reading, and other places ; and Roman villas discovered at Maidenhead, Hampstead Norris, Frilsham, and elsewhere. With the Romans also came Christianity, and at Silchester have recently been discovered the remains of what is probably the most ancient ecclesiastical building in the country,

the forerunner of the many beautiful churches which adorn our county.

But dark days were in store for our British ancestors, enfeebled by Roman luxury, when the legions were withdrawn to protect the centre of the Empire, and they were left to shift for themselves. The fierce Saxons poured into the land, a happy hunting ground for adventurous warriors, and with fire and sword destroyed the towns and villas which the Romans had left. Calleva, or Silchester, soon fell a prey to the ruthless conquerors, and was burnt to the ground.* This was said to have been accomplished by tying burning tow to a swallow's tail. The Celts were driven westward, and found a secure retreat in the fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall, where the British church lived on and waited the advent of better days.

The Saxons hated walled towns, which they regarded as "graves of freedom surrounded by nets," and loved to make clearings in the forests and form agricultural settlements. In no part of England have they left more enduring marks of their presence than in Berkshire. The names of

* So say the Chroniclers ; but modern investigators seem to think that the city did not fall a prey to fire and sword, but died a lingering death by the slow process of gradual decay.

our towns and villages are nearly all Saxon, and mark the spot where their powerful families formed their settlements. We find the Rædingas at Reading, the Wokings at Wokingham, the Ardings at Ardington, the sons of Offa at Uffington, the Farringas at Farringdon, and scattered all over the county are the *fields* and *hams*, and *steads* and *tons*, which denote a Saxon origin. The name of the county, too, is decidedly Saxon, and is probably derived from *Beorce*, the birch-tree, or from the Berroc wood, which occupied a large part of the *scire* or shire. It formed part of the important kingdom of Wessex, and soon became the battlefield of opposing tribes. Offa, King of Mercia (A.D. 756-796), wrested that portion which borders on the Thames from King Kinewulf, after the battle at Bensington. In the time of Egbert (A.D. 800), Wessex recovered its territory, and established its superiority over the other kingdoms of the Saxon Octarchy, its ruler becoming the first Bretwalda or monarch of England. In the time of Ethelred I., the brother of Alfred the Great, a Berkshire hero, born at Wantage, came the black raven of the Danes, and on the chalk hills many a fierce fight was fought between the old and new invaders.

At length, after the Danes had captured Reading, and were moving westward to ravage the whole country, Ethelred and his immortal brother Alfred drew up their Saxon hosts at Æscendune (the Ash-tree Hill), slew the Danish King Bægsceg, and put his yellow-haired warriors to flight. This great battle checked the conquering career of the Danes, who, though they made several incursions into the county, and set on fire Reading and Wallingford, gained no permanent footing in its valleys. The exact site of this victory has been vigorously disputed; it may possibly be identified with Ashdown, near Lambourne, where the white horse cut out on the adjoining hill is supposed to commemorate the valour of the Saxons, but the best authorities place it at Lowbury.

Ashmole states that when England was united under King Alfred, another division was made, and when the office of High Sheriff, or Vice Comes, was instituted, Berkshire and the adjoining county of Oxford were put under the authority of the same person.

In the war with the Danes during the reign of Ethelred II., Berkshire was again laid waste by fire and sword, and the barbarous invaders burnt

Reading, Wallingford, and other places in 1006. They destroyed, too, with ruthless hand the numerous churches and monasteries, which since the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, had been erected in our towns and hamlets. This conversion was accomplished by the preaching of Berin or Birinus, who, with a company of faithful monks, arrived in Berkshire about 636 A.D. He was received by King Kynegils, Oswald of Northumbria, his son-in-law, and other princes at Churn Knob, and convinced his hearers of the truth of Christianity. The King and his court were baptised at Dorchester, which became an important centre of missionary enterprise. The earliest monastic house was the famous abbey of Abingdon, founded by Heane, its first prior, and nephew of Cissa, Viceroy of Kentwine, who was a great benefactor to the monastery. Here also Heane's sister founded a nunnery dedicated to St. Helen, which was removed to Wytham. The abbey, in spite of being burned by the Danes, became very rich and prosperous. At Reading, Elfreda founded a nunnery in expiation of the murder of her step-son, and almost every village had its parish church. In the time of the Norman Conquest there were as many as 1,700.

At Sonning there was a bishop's palace, but although Leland speaks of the Bishops of Sonning, it was never an episcopal seat.

Soon the peaceful hamlets of Saxon folk were rudely disturbed by the advent of the Norman invaders, and Saxon writers lament over the sadness of the times, when English lands were bestowed upon the followers and favourites of the Conqueror, who reared their mighty strongholds everywhere, "filled with devils and evil men," who plundered the English, confined them in dungeons, and were guilty of every kind of cruelty and crime. At Wallingford, William received the submission of Archbishop Stigand and the principal barons before he marched to London. There arose the strong castle, built by Robert D'Oyly, and others were erected at Windsor, Reading, Newbury, and later at Farringdon, Brightwell, and Donnington. The history of the castles at Wallingford and Windsor will be recorded in this volume; Donnington endured an exciting siege during the Civil Wars; the others were speedily destroyed.

The foundation of the famous Abbey of Reading was the chief event for Berkshire in the reign of Henry I., a magnificent building, one of

the richest and most powerful in the kingdom. It was commenced in 1121. A royal charter was granted in 1125 conferring upon it important privileges, and the great Church of the Abbey was consecrated by Archbishop Becket in 1164. Here the embalmed body of King Henry I. was buried, and subsequently the eldest son of Henry II. found here a last resting-place. Here many stirring events in the annals of English history took place; here Parliaments were held and royal festivals, and many exciting conclaves sat to discuss the disputes of kings and barons and papal legates. To these inviting themes we need not now refer, as the history of the Abbey will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

The wars between Stephen and the Empress Maud devastated the county. As each side gained the supremacy they proceeded to take vengeance on the supporters of the vanquished, and the land was filled with fightings and bloodshed. Brian Fitzcount, the lord of Wallingford Castle, espoused the cause of the Empress, and his fortress afforded her a secure retreat when she fled from Oxford, dressed in white, across the icebound river. Farringdon Castle was captured by Stephen, and completely demolished. Around

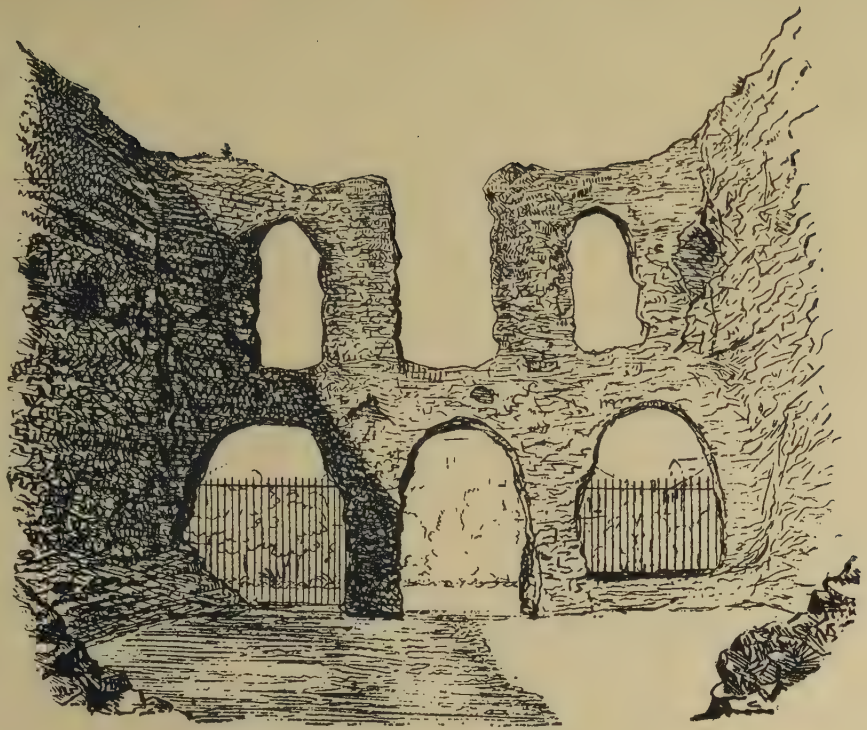
that Castle and the fortresses of Windsor, Reading, Newbury and Wallingford the war raged. Poor unfortunate prisoners for the sake of ransom were hanged by their feet, and smoked with foul smoke. Some were hanged by their thumbs, and knotted strings were writhed about their heads till they went into the brain, and others were placed in foul dungeons where adders and snakes and toads were crawling. The whole county was reduced to a howling wilderness by this relentless and long-continued war, until at length the country was wearied of fightings and plunderings, and peace was declared.

When John rebelled against his brother, Richard I., he seized Wallingford and Windsor Castles, but they were taken by the barons and bishops in the king's interest, and placed in the hands of the queen dowager. The strength of these two fortresses rendered them important as military stations in the troubles which took place during the latter part of the reign of King John, and also during that of Henry III. Reading was the scene of many stormy meetings of the barons and bishops opposed to the faithless John, and it was at Loddon Bridge that they assembled their forces, and marched on Staines ; and on the Isle of

Runimede, just beyond our Berkshire borders, they compelled the faithless king to sign the Charter of English liberties.

In 1263 Windsor Castle was besieged and captured by Simon de Montfort; and the battle of Radcot Bridge in the reign of Richard II., A.D. 1389, when Vere, Earl of Oxford was defeated by Henry, then Earl of Derby, was the only engagement which disturbed the comparatively peaceful repose of Berkshire in that period of its history. The unhappy child queen of Richard II., Isabella of Valois, after the dethronement of her husband, attempted to restore his rights by force of arms. Her forces assembled at Sunninghill, and marched to Wallingford and Abingdon; but her efforts were in vain; the power of Henry was too strong for the unhappy child-wife, who fell a prisoner into his hands.

Turning from the records of civil strife, we read of the great rejoicings which took place at Reading on the occasion of the marriage of John of Gaunt with Blanche of Lancaster, which were solemnized in the great church of the Abbey. The festivities lasted fourteen days, and tilts and tournaments were held daily. During the reign of the Edwards, the trade of the country increased;



RUINS OF READING ABBEY. THE PARLIAMENT HALL.

in the west, the farmers produced their rich fleeces, and the clothiers of Reading, Abingdon, and Newbury plied their looms and became wealthy. Thomas Cole is said to have flourished at Reading in the time of Edward I.; the famous John Winchcombe (otherwise Smalwood) better known as "Jack of Newbury," and Sir Thomas Dolman, were men of note in the sixteenth century.

In the fifteenth century, the plague raged frequently in London, and, in consequence, several parliaments were held at Reading; at one of them, in 1439, a new order of nobility, that of "viscount," was constituted. In the reign of Henry VIII., when many changes stirred the heart of England, we find Wolsey building his memorial chapel at Windsor, of which he was so soon deprived; we see the King hunting in the Forest of Windsor, and being strangely troubled in mind and conscience with regard to the lawfulness of his first marriage with Catharine of Arragon, when he had seen and loved the fairer Ann. Later we see the unhappy divorced Queen taking refuge within our borders at Easthampstead, mourning over the fickleness of men. Then were the fiery times of trial and persecution. According to Fuller, Newbury was one of the first places to receive the

doctrines of the Reformation, and there, in 1518, one Christopher the Shoemaker was burnt at the stake for heresy, and later, in 1566, Julius Palmer and two others suffered in a similar manner. In the meantime, a covetous king and greedy courtiers had set their eyes on the rich monasteries in England; and the noble Abbeys of Reading and Abingdon, and the lesser houses at Bisham, Donnington, Wallingford, and other places, soon met their doom. Hugh Farringdon, the last abbot of Reading, and two of his monks were hung. The last abbot of Abingdon, Rowland de Penthacost, fared better, and was allowed to retire on a pension to the manor-house of Cumnor. The effect of the dissolution of the religious houses was very disastrous. Agriculture languished; wheat became scarce and costly; the cloth trade declined; the poor suffered greatly from the loss of employment which the monasteries formerly afforded, and of the alms which the monks freely bestowed.

No important historical events occurred in the annals of the royal county until the outbreak of the Civil War. The kings and queens of England often resided at Windsor, hunted in the great

forest, made royal progresses through the chief towns, and sojourned at the Abbey of Reading, now used as a palace. Edward VI. was received with much state by the Mayor of Reading at Coley Cross in 1552. Queen Mary and her worthless husband were welcomed with much ceremony in 1554, when the mace was presented to her. Elizabeth came nine times to Reading, and had a royal seat appointed for her in the Church of St. Lawrence. The first of the Stuart kings honoured the town with a visit, and his queen stayed at Caversham House, where a mask was performed for her edification. In 1625, on account of the plague, Charles I. resided at Reading, where the Michaelmas term was kept, and the courts of chancery, king's bench, and common pleas were held in the abbey buildings.

Then followed one of the most disastrous periods of our county's history. In 1642, the High Sheriff of Berkshire refused to obey the king's command; the town of Reading was fortified, and King Charles passed through the town on his way to Oxford, his headquarters. Garrisons for the king were established at Farringdon, Abingdon, Wallingford, Greenwell House, Reading, Newbury, Donnington, and

Hungerford. Windsor was held by the Parliamentarians. Many of the people of Reading espoused the cause of the parliament, and left the town because the mayor and other chief men supported the king.

The war in Berkshire began, in 1643, with an attack on Reading by the Roundheads under Major Vavasour. The Royalists attempted to relieve the siege, but were beaten back at Caversham Bridge, and retired to Oxford. The town was captured by the enemy, and the West of England became the seat of war. Then followed the first battle of Newbury, which will be hereafter described. The Royalists were practically beaten, and the gallant Lord Falkland slain. Essex, the leader of the Parliamentarian forces, marched on London, harrassed by Prince Rupert's horse near Aldermaston. Reading was abandoned to the King, and placed under the command of Sir Jacob Astley. In 1644, the war at first raged chiefly in the North of England. Then Reading and Abingdon were captured by Essex, and all Berkshire, except the castles of Donnington and Farringdon, were in his hands. The cause of the Parliament in the West was not so prosperous; the King's plans had been suc-

cessful. The garrisons of Donnington, Newbury, and Basing had been relieved; but then followed the second battle of Newbury, which ended in the retreat of the Royalists. Then several marches through the county were made, and the royal forces, after going to Bath and Oxford, came again to Donnington, and thence went by Lambourne to Wantage and Farringdon, and finally to Oxford.

The whole of Berkshire was in a deplorable condition; the necessities of war were so great; the supplies needed for the victualling of such large armies were so heavy, that scarcely "a sheep, hen, hog, oats, hay, wheat, or any other thing for man to eat" were left. Soldiers on both sides foraged for supplies, and seized with ruthless hand everything they could find. Peaceful citizens were captured for the sake of ransom, and no goods could be conveyed safely along the roads without their owners paying large sums to the leaders of foraging parties who intercepted them. Numerous skirmishes took place in the campaign of 1645 without much advantage to either side. At last the skill of Fairfax and Cromwell proved too strong for the Royalists, and Bristol and Oxford fell. Donnington Castle,

under the gallant Sir John Boys, was the last fortress in Berkshire to yield, and he and his brave soldiers marched out with all the honours of war, having earned the admiration of both friend and foe.

Thus ended the Civil War in Berkshire. The King, now a prisoner, was allowed to stay at Caversham House with his children; but soon the end came, and the fatal scaffold at Whitehall ended the career of the unhappy monarch. The sequestrators in Berkshire did their work thoroughly; estates of Royalists were duly confiscated; the clergy ejected from their livings; and the Puritan rule fully established.

Shouts of joy welcomed the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In Reading there were great rejoicings, and a stage was set up in the market-place for the purpose of issuing the royal proclamation, and the King's arms were engraved on the mace. The Revolution of 1688 caused some commotion in Berkshire. In the cellars of Lady Place, at Hurley, many anxious meetings were held, which resulted in the advent of the Prince of Orange. Lord Lovelace, its owner, was one of his principal adherents, and he and his twenty followers were the first to strike a blow

for William. It was entirely unsuccessful, and a prison cell at Gloucester rewarded his rashness. At Hungerford, William met the King's commissioners, and then marched on Newbury, some of his forces being also present at Abingdon. Some fighting took place at Hungerford between the Irish troops of King James and the soldiers of William, who were entirely victorious. Reading also was the scene of fighting. The Irish soldiers quartered there threatened to massacre the inhabitants, who requested succour from William. A body of three hundred men were sent to their relief, and a sharp engagement took place in the market-place, in which the Prince's troops were victorious. The anniversary of the "Reading fight" was celebrated with great rejoicings for many years. There was some slight opposition to the progress of William's troops at Twyford and Maidenhead, but ere long London was reached, and William proclaimed King. There were not a few who sighed after the exiled sovereign, and many who could not reconcile it with their consciences to take the oath of allegiance to the new king. Shottesbrooke Manor-house was the resort of many famous non-jurors, amongst whom were Bishop Kenn,

Robert Nelson, Francis Cherry, Dr. Grade, and Henry Dodwell.

From this period the course of our county's history runs smoothly on, and is absorbed in that of England. Each ruined keep and moss-grown pile, each village green and scattered hamlet, has a history all its own, often buried beneath the weight of years, and little heeded by the present race of pilgrims.

Many of these shrines of an elder age it is now our privilege to visit, and to recall the memories of bygone times that cluster round the revered spots of ancient Berkshire. And as we muse upon her glorious past, we shall hold in pious memory the valour of her sons who have writ her name so large in history, and strive to retain untarnished the honour and good name of the Royal County.

# Windsor Castle.

By Evelyn Ingleby.

THE word Windsor is doubtless derived from the Anglo-Saxon "windle," a willow, probably referring to the winding course of the Thames, and "ofer," a shore, the "Windesoveres" of Geoffrey Gaimar, the "Winlesoren" of King Edward, the "Windesores" of Domesday, the "Windleshore" of Henry III.

The manor of Clewer, the site of the modern Windsor, consisting of five hides, was the property of Harold, son of Godwin, and, together with his other estates, fell at his death into the hands of William the Conqueror. William granted the manor to one Ralph, the son of Seifride, reserving, however, one-half of a hide on which were some earthworks, which are believed to be as old as the Heptarchy, and on which he built for himself a castle. This was styled, not Clewer Castle, but Windsor Castle, the name of Harold's royal residence, and since then has been intimately associated with English history, having been used

alternately by William's descendants as their palace, prison, and burial place.

Edward the Confessor had a "palace" at Windsor, though it is not easy to determine the exact situation.

William Rufus assembled a council at Windsor, and there imprisoned the rebellious Earl of Mowbray for the remaining thirty years of his life.

Henry I. built a chapel, probably on the site now occupied by the Albert Memorial Chapel, formerly known as Wolsey's Tomb-House. Windsor was a favourite summer residence of Henry, and it was here that, in 1121, he married Adelicia of Louvain, the "Fair Maid of Brabant." In 1127, Henry received at Windsor the homage of the nobles of the land, who at the same time swore allegiance to his daughter, the Empress Maud, or Matilda. As was usual on such solemn occasions, the coronation ceremony was repeated.

Windsor does not figure at all in Stephen's disturbed reign, but Henry II. frequently resided there, and in his tenth year expended the sum of 30s. on repairing the kitchen. Fabyan, a chronicler of the time, tells a pathetic story bearing on Henry's domestic troubles. "It is

recorded that in a chambere at Wyndsore he caused to be painted an eagle, with four birds, whereof three of them all rased (scratched) the body of the old eagle, and the fourth was scratching at the old eagle's eyes. When the question was asked of him (Henry) what thing that picture should signify? it was answered by him, 'This old eagle,' said he, 'is myself; and these four eagles betoken my four sons, the which cease not to pursue my death, and especially my youngest son, John, which now I love most, shall most especially await and imagine my death.'"

Windsor is closely connected with the granting of Magna Charta by John. Between Old Windsor and Staines is the flat meadow of Runimede, from which the Castle towers are visible. During the conferences which preceded and followed the ratification of this great charter, John went backwards and forwards to Windsor each day. He was at Windsor when he heard of the landing of the Dauphin Louis.

Henry III. greatly improved the Castle. The old hall in the Upper Ward was abandoned for a new and larger one in the Lower Ward, and, in 1272, he roofed the Keep. Part of the cloister

still stands as it was then built, and not long ago a portrait of the king, part of the painted decoration, was discovered. On the town side three great towers were built, and on the north was erected a tower on the same site as now stands the Winchester Tower. All the buildings were handsomely decorated with paintings and windows filled with glass. In one of the new towers on the western side was possibly the dungeon connected with a scene in Henry's career, which proved him, for all his piety, a worthy son of his father. The Londoners, headed by their Mayor, Fitz-Thomas, had long resisted Henry's exactions, and when, in 1265, the King was in their power, and Earl Simon de Monfort ruled the land, Fitz-Thomas addressed to his King words in St. Paul's which sank deep into Henry's soul. When the Battle of Evesham delivered his enemies into his hands, Henry summoned the Mayor and chief citizens to Windsor, giving them a safe conduct. They were then thrown into prison, from which it does not appear that Fitz-Thomas ever emerged, though the others, to the number of forty, were eventually released.

The two eldest sons of Edward I. were born at Windsor, and, though the King himself rarely

visited the Castle, Queen Eleanor seems often to have resided here.

In 1312 was born at Windsor one who was to do much for the castle, Edward III. During all his long reign Windsor was the scene of many displays of pomp and vanity, of tournaments, feasts, processions, besides councils, chapters, and great assemblies. The Upper Ward was entirely rebuilt, William of Wykeham—from whom the Winchester Tower derived its name—being the architect. It is said that the words "Hoc fecit Wykeham" were placed upon it, and that the wily prelate translated them to Edward as meaning, not "Wykeham made this," but "This made Wykeham."

Another story is told which points to the want of refined manners and delicate feeling of the Middle Ages. King Edward was conducting his royal prisoners, King John of France and King David of Scotland, round the Lower Ward, when one of them pointed out that the Upper Ward lay on higher ground and commanded a finer view. The King "approved their sayings, adding pleasantly that it should so be, and that he would bring his castle thither, that is to say, enlarge it so far with two other wards, the charges whereof

should be borne with their two ransoms," as afterwards happened. The story of King Arthur and the Round Table fired Edward with the idea of founding the institution of the Garter, and carpenters and masons were soon busy erecting the Round Tower for the Round Table. The table, made of fifty-two oaks, seems to have been in the shape of a horse shoe rather than a perfect circle, so that the attendants could stand in the middle to serve the guests. In this tower assembled the flower of English knighthood—Warwick, celebrated in the French wars, who, when he died of the plague in 1369, left "not behind him his equal;" the young Earl of Salisbury, whose beautiful mother is said to have given rise to the motto of the Order, "Honi soit qui mal y pense;" and many others besides, whose names are well known for their prowess and valour.

It was at Windsor that good Queen Philippa passed away, universally lamented. Froissart touchingly describes her death:—"There fell in England a heavy case and common, howbeit it was right piteous for the King, his children, and all the realm. For the good Queen of England, that so many good deeds had done in her time,

and so many knights succoured, and ladies and damsels comforted, and had so largely departed of her goods to her people, and naturally loved always the nation of Hainault, the country where she was born; she fell sick in the Castle of Windsor, the which sickness continued on her so long that there was no remedy but death. And the good lady, when she knew and perceived that there was with her no remedy but death, she desired to speak with the King, her husband. And when he was before her she put out of her bed her right hand, and took the King by his right hand, who was right sorrowful at heart. Then she said, 'Sir, we have in peace, joy, and great prosperity used all our time together. Sir, now I pray you, at our departing, that ye will grant me three desires.'" Her requests related to her debts, her promises to churches, and to her husband's "sepulture when so ever it shall please God to call you out of this transitory life," beside her in Westminster. "Then the good lady and Queen made on her the sign of the cross, and recommended the King, her husband, to God, and her youngest son, Thomas, who was beside her. And anon after, she yielded up the spirit, the which I believe surely the holy angels

received with great joy up to heaven, for in all her life she did neither in thought or deed thing whereby to lese her soul, as far as any creature could know."

Many important scenes in Richard II.'s life are laid in Windsor Castle. Two deputations waited upon him here with a list of their grievances. In 1390 he appointed Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, to superintend repairs in the chapel. The great dispute between Henry Bolingbroke, the last Knight of the Garter admitted by Edward III., and the Duke of Norfolk, took place at Windsor Castle, where, in the courtyard, King Richard sat on a platform, and gave judgment between the two, sentencing Bolingbroke to ten years' exile, and banishing Norfolk for life. It was at Windsor that Richard bade a last farewell to his child-queen, Isabella of France, then eleven years of age. The scene is touchingly described by a contemporary chronicler, who states that the King and Queen walked hand in hand from the Castle to the Lower Court, and entered the Deanery, passing thence into the chapel. After chanting a collect, Richard took his Queen into his arms, and kissing her twelve or thirteen times, said sorrowfully :—"Adieu, *ma chère*, until we

meet again; I commend me to you." Then the Queen began to weep, saying to the King:—"Alas! my lord, will you leave me here?" The royal pair then partook of comfits and wine in the Deanery, the King kissing his Queen many times and lifting her in his arms. "And by our lady, I never saw so great a lord," continues the chronicler, "make so much of nor show such great affection to a lady as did King Richard to his Queen. Great pity was it that they separated, for never saw they each other more."

After Richard's deposition and death, Isabella was detained by Henry IV., who would have married her to his madcap son, Prince Hal. Eventually, however, she married the Duc d' Orleans, this time choosing a husband much younger than herself.

A conspiracy against Henry IV. came to a head at Windsor, when the Duke of Exeter seized and searched the castle. Henry, however, had had timely warning, and had fled. "He rode to London and made him strong to ride on his enemies," and crushed the rebellion. The Castle during this reign held two unfortunate young prisoners, the Earl of March, whose only fault was his descent from an elder son of Edward III.,

Henry himself being descended from a younger branch; the other was one of the most unfortunate of the hapless house of Stuart, James Stuart. The king, his father, had sent him to France to complete his education. Henry, however, fearful of an alliance between France and Scotland, seized the Prince's vessel, and sent James to Windsor, declaring jocularly that England possessed good French teachers. Henry kept his word, and the young prince received a good education. He seems in every respect to have been treated as suited his rank, and was allowed plenty of freedom, sharing in all the festivities of the court. From his tower window he beheld and fell in love with the fair Joanna Beaufort, the king's niece, whom he eventually married. His return to Scotland marked the beginning of a sad and gloomy reign, and he was assassinated by his unruly nobles in 1437, to whom he had made himself odious by trying to curb their power.

In 1416, the Emperor Sigismund was present at the feast of St. George, bringing as an offering the heart of St. George, which remained in the chapel till the Reformation.

Whilst Henry V. was besieging Meaux he

heard of the birth of his son. "But when he heard reported the places of his nativity, were it that he, warned by some prophesie, or had some fore-knowledge, or else judged himself of his son's fortune, he said unto the Lord Fitz Hugh, his trusty chamberlain, these words, 'My lord, I, Henry, born at Monmouth, shall small time reign and much get, and Henry, born at Windsor, shall long reign and all lose; but as God will, so be it.'" Although this unfortunate Henry of Windsor spent all his early years at his birthplace, the Castle fell into a very neglected condition. On his marriage with Margaret of Anjou, some necessary repairs were made for her reception, and during his illness, in 1453, Henry lived here.

Edward IV. was the first monarch interred at Windsor, where his little daughter Mary and his son George of Clarence, supposed to have been drowned in a cask of wine, had been buried before him. In 1484, the remains of Henry VI. were removed from Chertsey Abbey, and interred beside those of his rival. In 1789 some workmen came across the lead coffin of Edward IV. On opening it the entire skeleton was found, measuring 6 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. A lock of

brown hair taken from the coffin is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. A bone of the leg was publicly sold by auction with the museum of a private collector a few years ago. It was understood at the time that the dishonoured relic was taken back to Windsor.

The poet Earl of Surrey was much at Windsor in his early life, and was imprisoned there in 1546. In one of his poems he gives a description of the large green courts, the stately seats, the secret groves, the wild forests, and other delights of the place. He was beheaded in 1547 for denying the king's supremacy in the church.

Queen Jane Seymour was buried at Windsor Castle with much pomp, a life-sized figure of the deceased was upon the pall, with a rich crown of gold upon her head, the hair all loose, a sceptre of gold in her right hand, and adorned with finger-rings and a necklace of gold and precious stones. In his will, Henry VIII. commanded that his body should be laid beside that of his "true and loving wife, Queen Jane."

Queen Elizabeth was very fond of Windsor Castle, and sometimes remained all the autumn and over Christmas. Between 1569 and 1577, more than £1000 a year was spent on improve-

ments, which, remembering Elizabeth's parsimony, is very surprising. It is said that Elizabeth desired to see "Falstaff in love," and therefore it was that Shakespeare laid the scene of the "Merry Wives" at Windsor. As Elizabeth was very fond of riding, many a gay cavalcade of beautiful ladies and gallant gentlemen must have issued from the gates of Windsor, whilst many a magnificent pageant must have been held, and many must have been the love scenes enacted here, during her long reign.

There are several old descriptions of the Castle at this period still extant, and among the Harleian MSS., is one generally attributed to Stowe. "Upon the north syde and uttar part of whiche (describing the Terrace) lodgings also, betwene the same and the browe or fall of the hill which is very stepe and pitche, is an excellent walk or baye, rennynge all along the sayd buyldyngs and the syd of the castele borne upp and susteyned with arches and boteres of stone and tymber rayled brest highe which is in lengthe 360 paces, and in bredthe 7, of such and excellent grace to the beholders and passers by lyenge open to the syght even afarre off; that the statelynes, pleasure, beautie, and the use thereof

semethe to contend one with another which of them should have the superioritie."

In 1642, the Parliamentary army occupied Windsor, and in the following year fifty-five political prisoners were lodged here under the command of Colonel Venn, who despoiled the chapel, and destroyed the deer in the Great Park. In 1647, Charles I. was a prisoner in the palace of his ancestors. After escaping from Hampton Court, and being confined in Carisbrook, he was brought back to Windsor in close custody of Colonel Whitchcott. The Governor was allowed £20 a day for his expenses. A month later, in January, 1649, he was removed to London. After his execution at Whitehall there ensued much discussion as to his place of burial, Windsor finally being chosen. A hearse, driven by the King's old coachman, and attended by four servants, conveyed the body to Windsor. The Governor refused to allowed the use of the Burial Service in the Common Prayer-book. With much difficulty the vault of Henry VIII. and Jane, his wife, was discovered. The Duke of Richmond scratched on a piece of lead, "King Charles, 1648," the year being then reckoned to end on the 25th of March. The following day

the King's coffin was brought out when "presently it began to snow, and the snow fell so fast that by the time the corpse came to the west end of the Royal Chapel, the black velvet pall was all white, the colour of innocency, being thick covered with snow." The coffin was placed on two trestles in the vault, and the velvet pall thrown in upon it. "Thus went the White King to his grave in the 48th year of his age," without ceremony or religious service.

In Charles II.'s reign the State apartments were remodelled, the architect being May, who probably only carried out the designs of Sir Christopher Wren. Verrio painted the walls and ceilings, and Gibbons carved the fittings. The £70,000 voted for a tomb to the memory of Charles I., was probably spent in these new buildings. Samuel Pepys visited Windsor in 1666, and was conducted to "where the late king is buried, and King Henry and my Lady Seymour. This being done to the King's house, and to observe the neatness and contrivance of the house and gates. It is the most romantique castle that is in the world. But Lord! the prospect that is in the balcone that is in the Queen's lodgings, and the terrace and walk, are

strange things to consider, being the best in the world, sure; and so, giving a great deal of money to this and that man and woman, we to our tavern and there dined."

James II. lived much at Windsor. His daughter Anne here gave birth to a child, baptised Anne Sophia, who, dying soon after, was buried in Henry VIII.'s vault. James alienated his subjects by committing the fatal error of receiving the Papal Nuncio. It was here also that the Prince of Orange held the consultation which resulted in the flight of James.

In 1700, the Duke of Gloucester, the longest lived of all Anne's nineteen children, died at Windsor, to the great grief of the nation. It was in one of the rooms now forming part of the Royal Library, of this castle that Queen Anne was sitting with the Duchess of Marlborough, when the news of the great victory of Blenheim arrived.

The first and second Georges did not care for Windsor, but it was a favourite residence of George III., but into such dilapidation was it allowed to fall, that in 1778 it was declared uninhabitable. It was therefore resolved to keep

what was standing from falling into ruins, but to build a new lodge on the site of the house which Queen Anne preferred as a residence to the magnificence of the Castle.

The new residence was a long, narrow building with battlements facing north towards the old Castle walls. It was here that Queen Charlotte lived when Fanny Burney, the author of "Evelina," afterwards known as Madame d' Arblay, was her maid-of-honour. According to Miss Burney's diary, the life at Windsor must have furnished anything but the excitement which is supposed to be the necessary element of court life. At eight o'clock, the king and queen attended prayers in the private chapel. In the afternoon, the king and queen and the princesses walked on the terrace. On this terrace, by-the-by, there is a sun-dial, which was the cause of an interesting little incident. The King and the Duke of York were one day walking on the terrace, when the king leant his arms on the sun-dial. A sentry immediately came forward and respectfully, but decidedly, informed the king that it was part of his duty to prevent any person from touching the dial. The king was so charmed, that he commended the soldier to his colonel, and

he was shortly afterwards promoted. Every evening there was music in the concert-room, the king being very fond of Handel. In 1788, Miss Burney describes one of the king's attacks. The Prince of Wales and his brother, and several doctors and equerries sat up all night, whilst the king raved up and down an adjoining room, and made occasional excursions in various apartments, addressing wild accusations of neglect to each and every of his attendants, till at length, Mr. Fairly, one of them, led him gently but forcibly away. During the king's illness, the Prince of Wales and Duke of York lodged in the Castle, and even held formal dinners there, whence it may be deduced that formerly even the royal kitchen in the Castle had fallen into desuetude.

Although the Queen's Lodge was now the chief royal residence, some attention was paid to the restoration of the ancient Castle, and in 1800, James Wyatt built a new staircase, and also restored some apartments looking on to the north terrace, whither the old king was removed during his last attack. On his death, he was laid under the chapel at the east end of St. George's, in the vault which in 1810 had been erected for his daughter Amelia.

During the reigns of George IV. and William IV., James Wyatt's brother, Jeffry Wyatt, whom George IV. knighted and called Wyatville, continued the work of restoration, and gradually nearly all traces of the Castle as it was during the latter part of the eighteenth century disappeared. He raised the Round Tower to its present height, designed the plan for the east and west sides of the Upper Ward, raised the level of all the roofs, filled up the Brick Court with a grand staircase, and the Horn Court with the Waterloo Gallery, united the stables, which were dotted throughout the Town, on Castle Hill, and built the Brunswick Tower, and the York and Lancaster Tower. It is to Wyatville's good taste and fine artistic perceptions that we owe the fact that Windsor retains its characteristics of a mediæval fortress, and has not been converted into a stiffly symmetrical building, then so much affected.

George IV.'s favourite residence was a lodge near the Long Walk, but two years before his death he removed to the Castle, and his long illness kept him prisoner here till his death. In the same room, later on called the Queen's Drawing-room, exactly seven years later, King William also died.

The chapel of St. George was made a Chapel Royal by Edward III. in 1348. The office of dean was, till the reign of Henry IV., held by a dignitary designated by the name of "custos." John Arundel, in Henry IV.'s reign, being the first to bear the title of "dean." At first the chapel was dedicated to St. Edward, but gradually, owing to its connection with the Order of the Garter, St. George superseded the former patron saint. Later on, Henry VII. had intended to make this chapel the tomb of his race, and the work was actually commenced when the king turned his attention to Westminster. Henry VIII. presented the chapel to Wolsey, and, about 1524, the Cardinal employed Benedetto of Florence to build a sumptuous sarcophagus of black marble, decorated with figures of copper gilt. After his disgrace, the magnificent metal-work lay neglected till the governorships of Colonel Venn and Colonel Whichcott, when these functionaries sold various figures and images as old brass, and realised a very handsome sum by the transaction. In 1805, the marble sarcophagus was removed to St. Paul's, to mark the grave of Lord Nelson.

In 1686 when James II. was mis-ruling the

land, he expended some £700 on repairing the chapel and in solemnizing high mass. In George III.'s reign the chapel was made the Royal Mausoleum, and Princess Amelia was the first to be interred in it. His wife, his sister, and six of his children and grandchildren were buried in the vault before George himself. There is room for forty-nine coffins, and already twenty-one have been placed in it, the Duke of Clarence and Avondale having been the last. Although the Prince Consort is buried at Frogmore, Wolsey's Tomb-house was selected as the site for the magnificent memorial in his honour. The interior of the chapel is lined with marble and mosaic, the walls are covered with reliefs, the windows are of stained glass. The cenotaph stands in front of the magnificent altar, and supports a recumbent statue, a personification of the Christian soldier described by St. Paul, of white marble, the face being a portrait of the Prince. A hound, a portrait of the Prince's favourite dog Eos, sits at his feet. This chapel, built by Henry III., and dedicated to St. Edward, and later on, known as Wolsey's Tomb-House, remains now as the Albert Memorial Chapel, one of the most splendid monuments of

the age. In the State Apartments there are many articles interesting on account of antiquity or associations. The Malachite Vase in the Ball Room is the best of its kind in England, the French tapestry is said to be unequalled, the Sévres porcelain is exquisitely delicate and beautiful. Many picture-frames, especially in the ante-room, are to be found, the work of Grinling Gibbons. Portraits by Vandyck in his best style abound, and there is a splendid series of portraits by Holbein. In the Guard Chamber there is a shield presented by Francis I. to Henry VIII. on the field of the Cloth of Gold, the work of Benvenuto Cellini.

The Library at Windsor is remarkably large and good, William IV. having gathered here the various collections at Kew, Hampton Court, and Kensington, and having brought to light many antiquarian treasures. Amongst these are the three volumes of the collection of drawings of Leonardo de Vinci, brought to England from Holland by Sir Peter Lely, and bought by Charles II., and the series of eighty-seven studies in red chalk and Indian ink of the principal personages of Henry VIII.'s Court by Hans Holbein. The illuminated manuscripts, both European and

Oriental are of much historical interest, and amongst them may be mentioned the "Mentz Psalter," of 1457, a copy of Coverdale's Bible of 1535, and the only perfect copy now in existence of Caxton's *Æsop's Fables* of 1484.

In the strong room are many gorgeous treasures of plate and jewels, and a set of golden dinner plates sufficient for a hundred guests, a wine-fountain taken from the Spanish Armada, Tippoo's jewelled peacock and solid gold footstool, in the shape of a tiger's head, and many other curiosities too numerous for mention. Some of the state apartments, especially the library, contain fine mantelpieces and panellings of great age, some going as far back as the sixteenth century.

After the Castle itself, the chief glory of Windsor is the Great Park, the remnant of a tract of 180 miles in circuit, which formed the happy hunting-ground of our mediæval kings. It is joined to the town and Castle by the Long Walk, the noble avenue of elms planted by Charles II. The Park is gently undulating, and dotted here and there with magnificent oaks and beeches, sometimes standing singly, sometimes in thick clumps. Looking from

George the Fourth's Gateway to the gilt statue which he erected to "the best of fathers," the beauty of the landscape thrills one with the satisfaction of perfection. The spirit of romance seems to pervade each fairy glade and hill, and visions of days long past arise before us, when lord and ladye fair on fiery steeds rode through the enchanted spot, and paused in their pursuit of the bounding deer, moved by the genius of the place, to whisper words of love. An oak measuring 26 feet 10 inches, at the height of 5 feet from the ground, is reckoned to be 800 years old. Three oaks in Cranbourne Chase, the oldest of which is probably 450 years, are called respectively, Queen Anne, Queen Charlotte, and Queen Victoria, these names it is scarcely necessary to explain, having been given since they evolved from their sapling stage. Herne's Oak, which Shakespeare memorialises in *The Merry Wives*, was, according to some blown down in a storm in 1863, and a sapling was planted to mark the spot. According to others it was cut down in mistake with other decayed trees by order of George III. At one corner of the Park there are some dozen oak trees, all as old as the Norman Conquest.

In fact, wherever one glances, be it at an old elm, or a bit of old carving half hidden in grass, or a china cup in the drawing-room, or a picture in the library, from the marble sarcophagus erected in memory of the Prince Consort to a blade of grass on the terrace, one finds endless cause for interest and deeper investigation. Such historical associations cling to every stone or crumb of earth, such romantic stories are whispered to one at every turn, such echoes of old-world times are re-called at every foot-fall, that no one could weary of visiting again and again this wondrous spot, to dream of bygone faces, fashions, and manners. And as one gazes, one feels the same pride in its beauty as stirred the hearts of Henry III. and Edward III., one understands the desire of the world-satiated Henry VIII. to rest in peace by the side of his best loved queen under those cool gray stones, and one feels a deep thankfulness that the storm-tossed Charles is at rest for evermore in that calm, sanctified, world-remote spot.

And Windsor does more than turn one's thoughts down the vista of past ages, it ennobles, it purifies. A reverence, an awe that only the sublime can inspire, takes possession of one's

heart when one contemplates this most glorious of England's royal homes. Nor has the hand of time dimmed its lustre. Windsor is still the home of the illustrious Queen whom all her subjects delight to honour. It is associated with tender memories of all the joys and many sorrows which the Ruler of our mighty Empire has experienced during the course of her long and glorious reign. And when we reflect on all that our Queen has done for the welfare of our nation, and of the vast Empire over which she rules, we can but echo the Laureate's words :—

"May she rule us long,
And leave us rulers of her blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
She wrought her people lasting good;
Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her a Mother, Wife, and Queen."

And ever mindful of her great sorrow let us say :—

"The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at His side again."

# Wallingford Castle.

By J. E. Field, M.A.

THE Castle, to which Wallingford owes its importance through six centuries of our annals, may have had its origin in a primitive fortress belonging to the original settlement upon the river-bank. But its actual history begins in the reign of Edward the Confessor, who, according to Domesday, had fifteen acres here, where a body of his huscarles or military retainers lived; these acres being the same that Milo Crispin, the Norman lord of the Castle, was occupying at the time of the Survey.

Whatever fortress existed in Edward's day was held by Wigod, the kinsman and cupbearer to the King; and the fact that Wigod favoured the cause of the Norman Duke, coupled with the circumstance of an advantageous position on an important ford of the river, caused Wallingford and its Castle to become what they were in history.

Hither, in consequence of the welcome offered

by the English Thane, William came after the Battle of Hastings, when London was fortified against him; and here he received the homage of Archbishop Stigand and the English nobles. Before moving back towards London he made the Norman influence secure at Wallingford by the marriage of his favourite chieftain, Robert D'Oilgi, with Wigod's daughter, who became eventually, if she was not already, heiress of the castle; for her only brother fell in battle, fighting by William's side against his son Robert. The King remained to take part in the festivities of the marriage, and ordered D'Oilgi to build a castle upon his new inheritance. In five years the castle was completed. D'Oilgi had an only daughter, Maud, who was married to another Norman chieftain, Milo Crispin, and after his death she became the wife of Brien Fitz-Count.

Tradition and history point to each of these lords in turn as having made additions to the castle which their father-in-law erected; for Crispin is said to have been the founder of the Collegiate Church in the southern precinct, and Fitz-Count is recorded as the builder of the famous dungeon called Cloere Brien, or Brien's Close, in the north-western precinct. Further

RUINS, WALLINGFORD CASTLE.

additions and renovations were made in later times; but under these Norman owners the Castle must have extended itself to the dimensions which it retained to the last, and of which we can still trace the relics.

From the river bank a few yards above the bridge it is easy to form an idea of what the great Norman fortress was. The lofty mound upon which the Keep was built, perhaps a prehistoric tumulus in its origin, is still the most prominent object, though all vestiges of the tower and its outworks have now disappeared, giving place to a luxuriant growth of forest trees. Close beside this mound, traces of the southern moat are to be seen, opening out upon the ditch which still separates the castle grounds from the meadow beside the river. The broken ground rising within the ditch shows the line of the eastern front of the castle with its projecting bastions overlooking the river, though all that now remains is an ivy-covered ruin with the opening of a large window, known as the Queen's Tower. In the background, and more to the right, is another fragmentary ruin, forming a central portion of the north wall; while a modern boat-house marks the outflow of the moat at its

north-eastern angle. From this point along the northern front a triple entrenchment is clearly shown by the undulations of the ground; the innermost ditch, close beneath the wall, being the moat of the Castle itself, while the second is the moat of the Castle precincts enclosing a space of intermediate ground on the west and south, and the outermost is the moat which enclosed the whole town; the three being brought close together in parallel lines along this side of the Castle. It must have been from this point of view, that Leland, in Henry the Eighth's reign, described the Castle as having "three dikes, large, deep, and well watered; about each of the two first dikes are embattled walls, sore in ruin and for the most part defaced; all the goodly buildings, with the towers and dungeon, be within the three dikes." Camden, who tells that "the size and magnificence of the Castle used to strike me with amazement when I came hither, a lad, from Oxford," describes it more accurately as "environed with a double wall and a double ditch."

South of the great mound and its protecting moat is the ruined tower and south wall of the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, now

surmounted by a modern turret; and adjoining it are some fragments of the other buildings of the college, with a good doorway and some windows of perpendicular character. Beyond these ruins a large portion of the second moat is to be seen. The south-western angle of the precincts, with the banks of the moat well preserved before it and behind it, is occupied by the modern dwelling-house. Lastly, near the north-western angle, where this outer precinct ends, the site of Brien Fitzcount's dungeon is shown; and the remains of it, with massive rings fixed to the stonework, existed here within the present century.

If the Norman Conqueror himself gained no direct advantage from the castle which he required D'Oilgi to build, his policy certainly bore its fruit in the days of his grandchildren. In the civil wars of Stephen's reign Brien Fitzcount was a leading supporter of Maud, the daughter of Henry Beauclerk and widow of the Emperor Henry IV. of Germany. The escape of the Empress from Oxford Castle, her flight in white garments through snow and ice by night to Abingdon, and her safe arrival at Wallingford Castle, are a familiar tale, perhaps embellished

through the ages, but well grounded in history. Stephen set up opposing forts across the river at Crowmarsh, and traces of them may still be seen on either side of the road near the eastern end of the bridge, while the meadow on the north is still called the Barbican.

Terrible stories are told of the sufferings endured by followers of Stephen who had the misfortune to become prisoners here under Fitzcount's custody; and for one influential prisoner, William Martel, the new dungeon of Brien's Close was made, from which he was only released on condition of delivering up the Castle of Shirburn and its adjacent lands as a ransom. Throughout the war Wallingford Castle under its indomitable lord was the most powerful of all the strongholds of the empress; and it was here, in a meadow beneath the walls, that the war was ended, through the treaty proposed by the Earl of Arundel, granting the kingdom to Stephen for his life and the succession to the Empress's son, Henry Plantagenet.

Brien Fitzcount took the cross and died in the Holy Land; his wife spent the rest of her life in a convent; their two sons were lepers; and the Castle of Wallingford passed to the new King,

Henry II. The part which it had taken in the cause of the Empress and her son had its reward in the high position which it occupied under the Plantagenet Kings. Henry favoured the town with special privileges, apparently exceeding any that were granted elsewhere; and here, at Easter 1155, he held his first Parliament. At Henry's death, Richard Cœur de Lion, before starting for the Holy Land, gave to his brother John the Honour of Wallingford; and one of John's first acts of rebellion was to gain possession of the Castle also, which the King had left in charge of the Archbishop of Rouen. When the barons under the Earl of Leicester recovered it for the King, the Queen Dowager, Eleanor of Poitou, became its custodian; and it is probably from her that the ruined fragment of the east front bore the name of the Queen's Tower, and from her also, we must presume, the meadow in front of it was called the Queen's Arbour. The value which John set upon the place still continued when he became King, as we may infer from his frequent visits to it, and the additions which he made to its garrison. His younger son, Richard, Earl of Cornwall and afterwards King of the Romans, was made Con-

stable at the close of John's reign ; and the Castle and Honour was eventually bestowed upon him by his brother Henry III.

Earl Richard probably did more both for the castle and the town than any other of its lords. He lived here in great state, enriching the townsmen by the liberal expenditure of his wealth and by the hospitality with which he entertained the court and the nobles of the realm. Two years after he came into possession he built the great hall of the Castle, and though this has disappeared, some of the arches of the bridge survive, vaulted with massive ribs, which certainly belong to this period and are probably Richard's work. Here too he brought his second bride, Senchia of Provence, in 1242, when the King and his court took part in sumptuous festivities to welcome her. He was elected King of the Romans in 1256, but the subsequent coronation at Rome, which would have made him German Emperor, never took place. Afterwards, when he was absent in Germany, the barons under Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, were rebelling against the King, and Wallingford Castle fell into their hands. The Countess of Leicester was residing here in 1262, when the

Earl visited her and a hundred and sixty-two horses were picketed within the Castle walls. The next year Richard was again in possession, and repelled successfully an assault of the barons; but after the disastrous battle of Lewes in 1264, it fell into Leicester's hands once more, and both Richard and the King, as well as Prince Henry, the son of Richard, were prisoners in it. The two Kings were removed to Kenilworth; but the next year, when Prince Edward, the King's son, defeated the barons at Evesham, King Henry was restored to his throne and Richard returned to his Castle. He died in the spring of 1272, and Wallingford Castle, together with the earldom of Cornwall, passed to his son Edmund. The new earl maintained the magnificence of his father. At the close of the year he introduced his bride, Margaret de Clare, sister of the Earl of Gloucester, with a splendid entertainment; he frequently received as a guest his cousin, King Edward I.; and he so largely augmented the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas in the Castle that he is often called its founder. When he died, in 1299, Wallingford fell to the King. Immediately upon the accession of Edward II., the Earldom of Cornwall, with the

lordship of Wallingford, was bestowed upon his unworthy favourite, Piers de Gaveston, who married Earl Edmund's widow; but his insolent career was cut short by the Earl of Warwick, under whose custody he was beheaded at Blacklow Hill. Another of the King's favourites, Hugh Despencer the younger, held the Castle and Honour for a time, until, in 1326, he fell a victim to the vengeance of Queen Isabella, who was now in open rebellion against her husband. She had already become possessed of the Castle, and eventually bestowed it upon her paramour, Roger Mortimer. Then followed the horrible murder of Edward II. at Berkeley; then Mortimer paid the penalty of his crimes at Tyburn, and Isabella became a prisoner at Castle Rising. Edward III. erected the earldom of Cornwall into a dukedom, and Parliament settled it in perpetuity upon the sovereign's eldest son, the Castle and Honour of Wallingford being one of the possessions by which the princely dignity was to be supported. Thus the Black Prince became its lord for forty years. After his marriage with Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, in 1361, this was their most frequent place of residence. Here also the princess remained

during the nine years of her widowhood, and here she died, and probably was buried, in 1385. Meanwhile the Black Death had visited the town in 1343; the population had been greatly diminished; several of the fourteen churches had been closed, never to be re-opened; the prosperity and attractiveness of the place was gone, and the Castle was no longer chosen as a favourite residence of royalty. But when it reverted to the crown at the death of the Princess, it was kept up as a military fortress of the first rank, under a constable appointed by the king, and its prominence in history was scarcely lessened. John Beaufort, the son of John of Gaunt, became constable in 1397, and two years later Thomas Chaucer was appointed. He was the reputed son, probably the step-son, of Geoffrey Chaucer the poet, and was almost certainly, like his predecessor, of royal but illegitimate parentage. Under his custody, the youthful Queen Isabella of Valois, the affianced bride of Richard II., was protected at the time of Bolingbroke's invasion, until Richard became a prisoner and the Castle surrendered to the usurper, when the child-queen was carried from one place to another, and at last, in her four-

teenth year, returned as a widow to her home in France. A letter of the new King, Henry IV., to his council, relating to Queen Isabella's departure, is dated from Wallingford in 1402. Chaucer was still the constable when the Castle and Honour were settled by King Henry V. upon his bride, Katherine of Valois, at their marriage in 1420. Two years later, the infant King Henry VI. succeeded to his throne, and in 1428, when he was taken from his mother's care, the Castle of Wallingford was assigned to him as one of his summer residences, under the guardianship of the Earl of Warwick. Chaucer died in 1434, and William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, his son-in-law, appears to have succeeded him as constable of the Castle. Here Suffolk had under his charge an important captive, Owen Tudor, an esquire of the body to the king, as he had been previously to Henry V. with whom he had fought at Agincourt; and here in his dungeon a secret marriage is said to have taken place between Tudor and the Dowager Queen Katherine, who had long been attached to him, the ceremony being performed by a priest who was his fellow-prisoner, while a servant who attended him was the only witness. Suffolk, now

raised to a dukedom, was accused by the populace of betraying his country to the French and preparing to fortify Wallingford on their behalf; and while the King befriended him, he was barbarously beheaded at sea; but his widow Alice, Chaucer's daughter, was made custodian of the Castle in his place. The House of Lancaster had raised Alice de la Pole to her dignities and honours; yet when the commencement of the Wars of the Roses favoured the rival house, she at once transferred her support to the Yorkists. In 1461, Edward of York became King, and the reward of Alice's faithlessness was the marriage of the young Duke, her son, with the lady Elizabeth, the King's sister, while she herself retained her Castle. There the heartless duchess and her son received under their custody the ex-Queen Margaret of Anjou, who had been the friend and patroness of her youth, but who now remained for five years her prisoner, until in 1476 her ransom was paid, and she returned to France.

In the events of the succeeding years there is little of immediate connection with Wallingford. Lord Lovell, who had been a ward of the Duke of Suffolk, was made constable by Richard III., but he fled to Flanders when his master fell at

Bosworth. Henry VII. reinstated Suffolk in the office, which he held for life, in spite of the rebellion of his son, Lord Lincoln, whom Edward IV., his uncle, had designated as his heir. After him the office was held for a time by Arthur, Prince of Wales. On one occasion at least, in 1518, Henry VIII. and his Court appear to have been residing here. Some twelve years later he entirely renovated the College of St. Nicholas; to which shortly afterwards "a fair steeple of stone," as Leland describes it, was added by Dr. Underhill, the Dean. No new appointment to the office of constable appears until 1535, when it was granted to Henry Norris, a nephew of the Lord Lovell who had held it fifty years before; but after six months he fell a victim to the King's displeasure and died upon the scaffold. In 1540 an Act of Parliament separated the Castle and Honour from the Duchy of Cornwall and annexed it to the Crown.

Edward VI. dissolved the College, and its buildings were shortly afterwards dismantled, together with those of the Castle-Keep and the Gatehouse. In the next reigns the lead and stones were conveyed in large quantities to Windsor Castle to be used in repairs and in

building the Poor Knights' lodgings. Yet the main fabric of the Castle remained, and was used for the imprisonment of heretics in the early years of Elizabeth. During all this time Sir Francis Knollys was constable, having been appointed to the office by Edward VI. in 1551. In the latter part of Elizabeth's reign he was succeeded by his son, Sir William, who became Viscount Wallingford under James I., and Earl of Banbury under Charles I.

We come now to the closing scene. The Castle was strongly fortified by King Charles at the commencement of the Civil War, and Colonel Blagge, an officer of distinguished courage in the King's army, was placed in charge of it, the King coming for a day and night to inspect the fortifications in 1643. Three years later, when every other castle had been captured except Raglan on the Welsh border and Pendennis in Cornwall, Wallingford still held out for the King's cause. The town was closely surrounded by the troops of the Parliament; but as long as there was any possibility of resistance the Governor refused to yield. For sixty-five days the resistance lasted, and only five of the garrison had fallen. At last, when all supplies were exhausted,

Colonel Blagge consented to make terms with Fairfax; and on July 29th, 1646, he was permitted to lead out his officers and men with flying colours and martial music as if they had been the victors. The Castle was a state prison during the remainder of the war, but the old sentiment seems to have lingered about the place to the last. In 1652 a conspiracy was detected for delivering it up to King Charles II., for which a soldier of the garrison was condemned to death, and an order was issued for the demolition of the building.

The last of the line of constables was Edmund Dunch, appointed by his cousin Oliver Cromwell, who also created him Baron Burnell of East Wittenham in 1658; but Dunch became a strong supporter of the King's restoration. The demolition had then been effected, and part of the materials were used in building the tower of St. Mary's Church. During the eighteenth century the estate was let on lease, and afterwards sold to private owners by the Commissioners of the Crown; while the broken fragments which are left of the Castle tell the story of the completeness of its ruin, and serve as a memorial of its ancient greatness.

# Cumnor Place and Amy Robsart.

By. H. J. Reid, f.s.a.

A BENEDICTINE abbey was founded as is well known at Abingdon, in the seventh century, and to this rich and powerful monastery, Cumnor appears from the very first to have belonged. Its earliest mention is found in the "Chronicles of the Monastery of Abingdon," in which "the book," probably a register or cartulary is repeatedly referred to.

Cumnor according to Dugdale is derived from Cumanus, second abbot of Abingdon, who died *circa* 784, but Dr. Buckler, author of "Stemmata Chicheleana," and keeper of the Archives of Oxford University, who was vicar of Cumnor for twenty-five years, suggests St. Coleman or Cuman, an Irish or Scottish saint, who lived in the sixth and seventh century. As early as the year 689, Colmonora is mentioned in a Latin deed in the Abingdon Chronicle, twenty hides of land there being conferred upon the Abbey by a Charter of Ceadwalla, and again in a similar

deed, being a Charter of Kenulph, dated 851, in which is an illuminated portrait of that King. An Anglo-Saxon boundary attached to Eadred's confirmation Charter to Abingdon in 955, mentions Cumnor, as does also a subsequent charter of Edgar, 968, which also has a carefully defined boundary attached to it, and the biography of St. Ethelwold, who refounded the Abbey after its destruction by the Danes, 240 years after the original foundation of Abbot Heane. It is very improbable that these documents are authentic. They may possibly be copies, but are more probably forgeries, made for various purposes in later years, based in many instances doubtless upon the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who died about 1154, leaving what was professedly the translation of a work in the British tongue made at the request of Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. It contains perhaps a modicum of fact, but is not dependable; it has been largely drawn upon by later so called historians and romancers. Nevertheless there is every reason to believe that Cumnor from the very earliest times belonged to Abingdon Abbey, its name in early documents being written Cumenoran, and the Church is known to have

been one out of but three spared by the Danes, when they ravished the district around and destroyed Abingdon in the reign of Alfred the Great.

The Norman Conquest has left us more certain and dependable records. From the survey of Domesday we ascertain that Comenore in 1086 contained thirty hides of land, having been rated *tempore Regis Edwardi*, at fifty hides. It will be remembered the early English Charters gave twenty hides as its extent, so that the Manor had by this time been either added to, or the hidation varied, possibly both. The Manor maintained sixty villani, sixty-nine bordarii or freemen, with four servi or bondsmen ; the Church is mentioned, as also two fisheries of the value of forty shillings yearly. Sevacoord, or Seacourt, and Winteham probably Wytham, were a portion of Cumnor which is the first manor mentioned in Domesday Book, belonging to the Abbey of Abingdon, and in evidence of ancient right it is expressly written there :—"Semper fuit de Abbatia." Cumnor Church is again alluded to in a Papal Bull dated 1152, but there are now no visible traces of this edifice. The present church which underwent thorough restoration some

forty years ago, having previously suffered by injudicious alterations at various times, is of the Transition period, the most ancient portion being the tower, according to the dicta of ecclesiastical architects, not erected before the year 1250. Many objects of great interest to the Archæologist are yet preserved in and about the church, despite the more recent restorations. Among others, are two stone coffins, enclosing the remains of former Abbots of Abingdon, two piscinæ, and of yet more recent date the tomb of Anthony Forster, of whom I shall have something to say presently. Some of the stone carvings within the church, are of great delicacy, being remarkably fine examples of fourteenth century work, in the shape of two corbels, the capitals of three columns, a window, and the portion of an arch.

In the chancel are some poppy heads, carved upon both sides; on one is the sacred monogram I. H. S. upon a shield, upon another the five stigmata, *i.e.*, the pierced feet, the hands, and heart of the Saviour, also a cross; upon the reverses are also carved the crucifixial emblems. —the ladder, spear, and reed or staff, to which is affixed a sponge; there are also the hammer,

CUMNOR CHURCH.

pincers, and three nails. Upon the upper shield are the Vestments, the crown of thorns, and bag of money.

A letter referring to Cumnor Church during the Civil Wars, written by a member of the Pecock or Peacock family is printed in Mercurius Academicus. This family held the Manor at that period, Richard Pecock compounding for his estate by paying the considerable sum of £140. Many of the family lie buried in Cumnor Church, and the school is mainly supported by the legacy of a Mrs. Peacock.

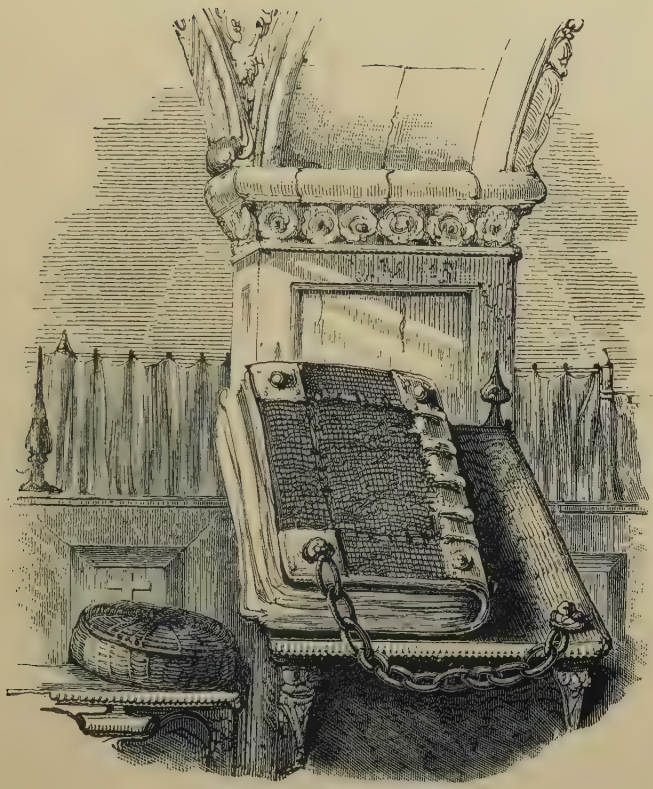
The letter refers principally to the conduct of certain soldiers, who, finding nothing worth removing, took down the weathercock, "that might have been left alone to turn round," and did much other damage. The letter is dated Thursday; February 26th, 1644, and is as follows:—"To present you with as honest men as those of Evesham and honeste you will not deeme them to be when you heare they came from Abingdon, to a place called Cumner in no smaller a number than 500; where the chieftains view the church, goe up into the steeple and overlook the country as if they meant to garrison there, but finding it not answerable to their

hopes and desires they descend, but are loathe to depart without leaving a mark of their iniquitie and impiety behind them. Some they employ to take down the weather cock (that might have been left alone to turn round), others take down a cross from off an isle of the church (and this you must not blame them for they are enemies to the cross), others to plunder the countrymens' houses of bread, beare, and bacon, and whatsoever else was fit for sustentation."

There is also copied in a late seventeenth century MS. volume in the British Museum, (Harl. 6365, 53 b.), an epitaph, which, I believe, may yet be seen in the church, and is rather quaint and curious.

From the same MS.,* I copied a description of Anthony Forster's monument. "In ye chancell against ye north wall, a great marble monument with pillars of marble. On a plate of brass faced to it ye picture of a man in armour, kneeling before a table upon a book. At the foot thereof, his helmett, at ye sides his gauntletts, over against him his wife kneeling, as her husband. Behind her three children, between them this coat; 3 Bugles, Q, 3 phœons, points upwards,

* Harl. 6395, Plut. xlix, g.



CHAINED BIBLE, CUMNOR CHURCH.

with mantling and crest, which is a stag, lodged, and regardant. Gu. charged on ye shoulder, with a martlett, or, and pierced thro' ye neck with an arrow, ar. Behind the man this coat; 3 Bugles, Q., 3 phœons, points upwards, impaling 2 organ pipes in saltere between 4 crosses, paty. Then follow the quarterings. Behind ye woman is this coat: Williams. Az. 2 organ pipes in saltere between 4 crosses, paty. Quarterings as before described. Under them both a great brass plate, on ye part of it under him the following verses––." These need not now be recorded; they will be found in Ashmole, and also translated in most editions of Scott's Kenilworth. They record his many accomplishments and virtues, and relate he was wise, eloquent, just, charitable, learned in the classics, in literature, music, architecture, and in botany. The date of his death is not mentioned, his burial however is recorded as taking place Nov. 10th, 1572, by the parish register, which cannot err.

He is therein mentioned as A. F., gentleman, the last word being written over an erasure, and it has been thought by some, that an epithet not so complimentary had previously been placed there, but erased, and "gentleman" substituted. I see

no reason for such a suggestion; possibly some latin term may originally have been written, *e. g.*, "miles," and the English word "gentleman" was thought more appropriate. At any rate, Anthony Forster was buried at Cumnor, Nov. 10th, 1572. Cumnor Place, Forster's residence, was an early fourteenth century house, used as a residence by the Abbots of Abingdon, and also as a place of removal or sanitorium by the monks, particularly during the plague, or black death, which decimated England under Edward III. At this period, it served both as rectory and manse house, where tithe and rents were paid, and Manorial Courts held, and where tenants were bound to attend to do suit and service for their lands to their superior lords. Such was Cumnor Place, until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. In 1538, it was granted for life by the Crown to Thomas Pentecost or Rowland, last Abbot of Abingdon, in consideration of his having willingly surrendered the Abbey and its possessions to the King. Rowland either died the following year or ceded Cumnor Place to the King, who seems to have retained possession for seven years, when, by patent, dated Windsor, Oct. 8th, 1546, the Lord-

ship, Manor, and rectorial tithes of Cumnor, with all its rights and appurtenances, particularly the Capital Messuage, Cumnor Place, and the close adjoining, called the Park, and three closes called Saffron Plottye, etc., were granted to George Owen, Esq., the King's physician, and to John Bridges, doctor in physic, in consideration of two closes in St. Thomas' parish, Oxford, the site of Rowley Abbey, and the sum of £310 12s. 9d., cash. William Owen, son of Dr. Owen, married, April 24th, 1558, Ursula, daughter of Alexander Fettiplace, the estate being then settled upon him. Shortly afterwards, Cumnor Place was leased to Anthony Forster, and it was in his occupation when occured the tragic incident which forms the concluding scene in Sir Walter Scott's Kenilworth, the death of Amy Robsart, wife of Sir Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester.

In the following year, Anthony Forster purchased the property from Owen, and seems to have greatly enlarged and otherwise improved the mansion. Dying in November, 1572, he devised the estate to Dudley, subject to a payment of £1,200 to Forster's heirs. These conditions, its seems the Earl accepted, but retained possession for a single year only, as is

proved by a document among the Longleat papers purporting to be a record of the sale of Cumnor by the Earl of Leicester, to Harry le Norris, ancestor of the Earls of Abingdon, which bears date 15th February, 16th Elizabeth, 1575.

From this time Cumnor seems to have gradually fallen into decay. Possibly the sad end of Lady Dudley may have contributed to this; at all events, rumours were spread among the villagers that her ghost haunted the locality, and a tradition is even yet received by them that her spirit was so unquiet that it required nine parsons from Oxford to lay the ghost, which they at last effectually did, in a pond hard by, the water in which does not freeze it is said, even in the most severe winter. This pond is still shown by the villagers, although they are quite unable to assign any reason for the peculiar conduct of the ghost.

Neglected for nearly a hundred years, a portion of the ruined mansion was then converted into a malthouse, afterwards into labourer's dwellings, and finally demolished in 1810, for the purpose of rebuilding Wytham Church. Among other mementoes of its former owner was an arch bearing upon the label the in-

scription "*Janua Vitæ Verbvm Domini. Anthonius Forster*, 1575." This, with some handsome tracery windows, was removed to Wytham, the arch being built into the entrance wall of the churchyard. The date and name were for some reason destroyed, possibly to evade an apparent anachronism, for Anthony Forster had been dead two years in 1575. These windows and other objects of interest were engraved in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1821.

It is said and I believe truly, that so great interest was excited in Cumnor Place, by Sir W. Scott's novel, that the Earl of Abingdon was induced to drive some visitors from Wytham to see the ruins, forgetting that some years previously he had given order for their demolition. The disappointment of the party on arriving upon the ground was great, as may be imagined, and not less so that of the Earl, who too late realized his mistake. The disappointment was felt by everybody, for it is said all the world hastened to the site of the tragedy so graphically described by Scott, only to find they were too late. The public was not then aware that its sympathies had been aroused by the vivid imagination and marvellous genius of the novelist, and that while

there was just a substratum of fact the greater portion of this historical novel had no foundation other than the great constructive power of the Author. While thousands deplored the untimely fate of Amy Robsart, their sympathies were in truth tributes to the dramatic powers of the novelist, not to the unfortunate heroine; the novel may be said to bristle with chronological inaccuracies, and utter disregard for historic fact.

It has been repeatedly reasoned that novelists should be permitted a certain licence, and in actual fiction this may possibly be; but if the subject and characters chosen are both historical, misconceptions may easily arise, and erroneous statements be indelibly impressed upon the mind of the reader. Let us recall to our memories the outline of Kenilworth, and then notice some of Scott's most glaring historical inaccuracies and anachronisms, and while I have no intention of attempting a defence for Robert Dudley and his followers, for the crime here alleged to have been committed, I believe I shall be able to show that he was, in this instance at any rate, greatly maligned.

The plot in brief is as follows :—Robert Dudley,

Earl of Leicester, son of the Duke of Northumberland, who had been executed for endeavouring to place Lady Jane Grey upon the throne, having secretly married Amy Robsart, desires to be free, and confides his wishes to his retainers, Richard Varney and Anthony Forster. The Countess, who was living in retirement at Cumnor Place, hearing of the festivities given by her husband at Kenilworth, goes secretly there, and has a most affecting interview with Queen Elizabeth, in the course of which the Queen bitterly reproaches Leicester. At length, by specious promises, he prevails upon Amy to return to Cumnor, arranging to come to her as soon as liberated from his attendance upon the Queen. She complies, and is assigned by Forster a portion of the building approached only by a drawbridge in which is concealed a trap-door. At night Varney, riding hastily into the courtyard, gives the Earl's private signal—a peculiar whistle—on hearing which Amy rushes out to meet her husband; but Forster having meanwhile withdrawn the bolts, she falls through the trap. "A faint groan and all is over." Immediate punishment overtakes the criminals. Varney is arrested, but poisons himself in his cell, while Forster, in his hasty

endeavour to escape, closes behind him a secret door, and dies a lingering death.

Scott tells us in later editions of Kenilworth (the first was published in 1821), that he based his story upon a beautiful ballad by W. J. Mickle, the translator of Camoens Lusiad, which had deeply impressed him; and Ashmole's Antiquities of Berkshire is cited at length by him as the principal authority upon which the novel was based. But Ashmole was in this instance only a copyist, and his antiquities were not published until 1717, nearly 160 years after Lady Dudley's death. He copied almost verbatim from a most scurrillous work called "Leicester's Commonwealth," published in 1584 for political purposes, known subsequently as "Father Parson's Green Coat," from the colour of the wrapper in which it was introduced from abroad by its author the celebrated Jesuit, Robert Parsons, although the authorship has been attributed to Cecil, Lord Burleigh. It was issued at first in MSS., and eight MS. copies are preserved in the British Museum, and two in the Bodleian. Sir Philip Sidney immediately issued a hasty answer to these charges against his relative, but this was not actually

printed until 1746, and had but little effect at the time.

"Leicester's Commonwealth" was no sooner in circulation than the attention of Government was directed to it, and it was stigmatised by the Queen and Privy Council at "most malicious, false, and scandalous, and such as none but an incarnate devil could dream to be true." Without attempting a defence of Leicester, the character of his defamer may assist in forming a judgement how far any of his statements may be received, bearing in mind that both in religion and politics he was antagonistic to the Earl.

Of obscure, if not questionable birth, Parsons was educated in the reformed religion at Balliol College, Oxford, at the expense of his putative father. There he quickly rose to the position of dean and bursar, but was compelled to resign these appointments in order to avoid expulsion for incontinence and embezzlement of college funds. Quitting England for Rome, he then adopted the Romish faith and became a member of the Society of Jesus. Next, visiting Spain, he was most active in urging the Spanish King to despatch the Invincible Armada, and, after its destruction, used all his influence to promote a

second invasion. A bold, clever, intriguing, and unscrupulous traitor, he is known to have even contemplated the assassination of Queen Elizabeth, and by his writings to have supported the claims of the Spanish Infanta against King James to the English throne. Such was the man, who did not hesitate to hurl broadcast accusations of the most atrocious character against his opponents, sheltering himself meanwhile abroad from the prosecution his many infamies deserved. To this man principally are traced the calumnies upon Leicester, Varney, and Forster, which have been so unfortunately perpetuated in "Kenilworth."

Much of the interest in the novel centres in the alleged secret marriage of Amy Robsart (who is described as daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Devonshire), and Dudley. Amy is made to say, "I am but a disguised Countess, and will not take dignity on me until authorised by him whom I derive it from." Again she is described as "the Countess Amy, for to that rank she was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest Earl," Leicester, as I must here call him, further on saying "She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted Earl."

Now for the facts. Amy was only daughter of Sir John Robsart, a Knight of ancient lineage, belonging to Norfolk, born at Stansfield Hall in that County, afterwards notorious as the scene of the murder of Mr. Isaac Jermy and his son by Rush. She had an illegitimate brother named Arthur, and an elder half-brother by her mother's previous marriage named Appleyard. Among the Longleat papers is a settlement on the husband's side, dated 24th May, 1550, in contemplation of the marriage. On the lady's part a deed executed by her father, Sir John Robsart, is preserved in P.R.O., London, and dated 15th May, 1520. The marriage itself could scarcely have been more public than it was. It must certainly have been well known to the Queen, who not improbably may have been present; her brother, Edward VI., certainly was. I had occasion to examine an autograph diary of this youthful King, now preserved in the British Museum (Cott MS. New Edit. 10), usually described as a "little diary." As a matter of fact the diary is of full quarto size; its first page having the Royal Arms and monogram E. R. in gold and colours. Each leaf has now been placed separately between folio pages for preservation.

Bound up with it are many letters from the King, carefully written and principally in latin. In one writing from Hatfield he explains in most affectionate terms that he had delayed writing "Non negligentia sed studium." In this diary is recorded in King Edward's own handwriting that the Court being at Sheen, the old name for Richmond, upon June 4th, 1550.

"S. Robert dudeley, third sonne to th erle of warwic maried S. Jon. Robsartes daughter after wich mariage ther were certain Gentlemen that did strive to who shuld first take away a goses heade wich was hanged alive on tow crose postes. Ther was tilting and tourney on foot on the 5th, and on the 6th he removed to Greenwich."

Canon Jackson found at Longleat many documents dated after the marriage, one a grant of the Manor of Hemsby, Norfolk, by John, then Duke of Northumberland, to his son Lord Robert Dudley, and the lady Amye his wife, 7th Edward VI., 1553; another 30th Jan., 3 & 4 Philip and Mary, 1557, dated Sydisterne, after Sir John Robsart's death; there is also a license of alienation to Sir Robert Dudley and Amye his wife, 24th March, 4 & 5 Philip and Mary, 1558. The marriage therefore was very generally known, and there was neither abduction nor secrecy. I will now show that Amye was never Countess

of Leicester, nor was she ever at Kenilworth, and for this reason. Kenilworth was not granted to Sir Robert, otherwise called Lord Robert Dudley, until June 20th, 1563, and he was not created Earl of Leicester until the 29th September following, three years after Amy Dudley's death. Queen Elizabeth did not pay her celebrated visit to Kenilworth until 1575, or fifteen years after Amy's death. It is therefore an absolute impossibility for the latter to have ever known the title of Countess of Leicester, to have been present at Kenilworth during the Queen's visit, or to have had the interview with her described with so much pathos. Endeavours to correct these and similar historical errors have been frequently made, but the attempt appears hopeless. Not long ago, the most influential of our London newspapers reiterated the statement that Amy Dudley was "the wife of Lord Leicester;" but not content with this, the writer further blundered by describing Lucy Robsart, wife of Mr. Edward Walpole, of Houghton Hall, as her elder sister. It is almost needless to say Amy Robsart had no sister, and but one brother, Arthur, who was illegitimate. Lucy Robsart was her aunt, daughter of Sir Terry, or Theodoric Robsart.

Canon Jackson appears to have satisfactorily identified the villain Varney, and rescued him from the unmerited opprobrium cast upon him. Longleat documents point him out as Richard Verney, of Compton Verney, Warwickshire, ancestor of the Lords Willoughby de Broke. This Varney was a knight anterior to 1559, and then apparently a stranger to Lord Dudley; for in that year, Sir Ambrose Cave writes to Dudley, recommending Sir Richard Verney as a fitting person to hold certain office in Warwickshire. In 1561, a year after Amy Dudley's death, he was High-Sheriff of his county, and he did not die until seven years *after*, viz., 1567, and eight years *before* Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth. An anonymous writer in Macmillan, some two years ago, brought forward another Verney. He said, the Willoughbys and Verneys of Compton Merdac, not Compton Verney, did not intermarry till the next century; and co-temporary with the Richard Verney above mentioned was another Richard, belonging to a Buckinghamshire family, connected with the Dudleys both by marriage and misfortunes. Sir Ralph Verney had three sons, Edmund, Francis, and Richard. Edmund and Richard were implicated in the

Conspiracy of Lady Jane Grey. Francis had been Elizabeth's servant when in confinement at Woodstock, and had been charged with tampering with a letter, and, we are told, had about as bad a name as any young gentleman of his day. Of Richard nothing is known with certainty, but in 1572, that is five years after the death of Canon Jackson's Knight, a Richard Varney was appointed to the Marshalship of the Bench for life, dying three years after, and on Nov. 15th, the same year, Leicester wrote begging Lord Shrewsbury not to fill up the place vacant by the death of Mr. Varney.

We have remarked that Anthony Forster's epitaph was most eulogistic. This may perhaps be exaggerated, as is undoubtedly Scott's description of him. He makes him out to be the son of the Abbot of Abingdon's Reeve, a widower with one child, Janet; a miserly curmudgeon, bordering on deformity, with no redeeming point save affection for this child. Michael Lamborne speaks to him thus familiarly:—

"Here, you Tony Fire-the-Fagot, papist, puritan, hypocrite, miser, profligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence

him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshippest."

The Forster of fact, was a totally different person. He was of an ancient Shropshire family, and had married Ann, niece of Lord Williams of Thame, Lord Chamberlain under Philip and Mary. His three, children, represented on his memorial brass, predeceased him. He was, towards the close of his life, Member of Parliament for the borough of Abingdon, and chosen, upon at least one occasion, by the University of Oxford to settle a noisy controversy. He was a personal friend of Lord Dudleys, and controller of his enormous expenditure. All Dudley's accounts passed through Forster's hands. All payments had to be sanctioned by him. Bundles of such accounts showing careful examination are now at Longleat, filed, says Canon Jackson, as left by Anthony Forster. They all bear his signature or initials, and the date 1566, six years after Tony Foster had been starved to death in his secret chamber.

I would now mention some of the minor circumstances and persons mentioned in the novel, respecting whom chronological errors are noticable.

We have seen that Varney, to whatever family he belonged, died before the great Kenilworth festivities in honour of the Royal Visit, and that Amy had died fifteen years before that event. Sir W. Raleigh, who in the novel is introduced strewing his cloak before the Queen and subsequently knighted by her with Varney at Kenilworth, was not knighted until 1584, nine years after her visit, twenty-four years after Amy's death; and as he was born in 1552, was actually eight years old when that occurred.

On her journey from Cumnor Place to Kenilworth, accompanied by Wayland Smith, Amy passes through Donnington. They overtake the Hock Tide revellers from this village, also upon the road to Kenilworth. Donnington Castle is also mentioned earlier in the story. To pass through this hamlet, *en route* for Kenilworth, would be equivalent to travelling from say Reading to Birmingham in order to reach London. It is probable Sir Walter intended to write Deddington, which is in Oxfordshire, and on the direct road Amy would have had to travel, but it is strange the error has never been corrected. The revellers really came from

Coventry, an entirely opposite route to that Lady Dudley would have had to pursue.

I have only given a few of the most evident anachronisms which permeate the novel, and many others might be mentioned. Many extracts from the story might be quoted, which show the carelessness of the great novelist as regards chonology ; yet dates ought to have met with every consideration from him : he was professedly, at any rate, an antiquary, professionally a writer to the Signet or lawyer, where accuracy is all in all.

I have little reason to believe that an inn existed at Cumnor, in Elizabeth's time, and although it is curious Scott should have selected as the name of its landlord, Giles Gosling, it should be remembered he had access assuredly to Ashmole, wherein are many Berkshire names, both of persons and places, and Gosling is certainly a Berkshire name. We have also in Berkshire places named Lamborne and Thatcham, both characters in the novel ; the former, indeed, was represented at Cumnor a few years ago, and may be now, and there is in the parish register in 1562, record of the burial of one Gosling. But I am of opinion the selection of these names is

purely accidental. As regards the alehouse, Inns as a rule increase in number, and but rarely, if ever, disappear, and the sole inn at Cumnor would be likely to thrive. It so happened that in 1636, John Taylor, the water poet, travelled through England, and made a list of inns for the use of his customers, for he was a tavern keeper also, and he gave the names of all the inns in Berkshire to the number of forty. At Abingdon, he says, was one kept by John Prince, who at his pleasure might keep three, but there is no mention whatever of the Jolly Black Bear or other inns at Cumnor. Bearing this in mind, and taking into consideration the total ignorance of Scott as to the site of Cumnor, its situation in the county, and even of the plan of the Hall itself, I think it most improbable that the Wizard of the North ever visited the village he has made for ever famous, despite his many anachronisms.

It is not for me to defend Dudley against the suggestions of being privy to the assasination of his wife, any more than to defend him from the accusation of having been the cause of the deaths of many others as charged against him in "Leicester's Commonwealth." Here, among others, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, Lord Sheffield'

and Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, are said to have been poisoned by him; but rumours of poisoning were at that time prevalent, and it was suggested he had endeavoured to make away by poison with his wife Amy, in order to be free to marry Queen Elizabeth; one writer has within the last few years gone so far as to charge Elizabeth with complicity. She was certainly of a jealous disposition, for when Leicester eventually married the widow of the Earl of Essex, he narrowly escaped imprisonment in the tower, and was actually banished from the court; similarly when Raleigh dared to marry, he being forty and Elizabeth fifty-nine, he was sent to the tower to cool his ardour. Mr. Rye, who is confident Amy Robsart was murdered, and Elizabeth privy to the fact, says, "By some, Anne Boleyn is made out to be an innocent woman, who, with her brother, was judicially murdered by her husband, to make room for Jane Seymour, whom he married the day after her execution. If this view is right, Elizabeth was daughter of an atrocious murderer. But if as Mr. Froude believes, Anne Boleyn was guilty of the crimes attributed to her, then Elizabeth was the daughter of the vilest and most abandoned woman

of her age. There is no third course. Elizabeth must have been, on one side or the other, the daughter of an abominable parent, male or female as you please, and the inheritor of as bad blood as might be. But I contend it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Elizabeth knew that her rival's murder was being contemplated, and did not desire to prevent it, in which case she was an accessary before the fact, or that she must after the event have guessed, for she was no fool, that murder had been done to facilitate Leicester's plans, in which case she was in effect, an accessary after the fact."

One reason assigned for Dudley's desire to be free, is said to have been ambition, and again that his married life was by no means a happy one, and that he was practically divorced, living apart from Amy; she in the country, he at Court. Where they lived when first married is not known, but in 1553, Dudley was imprisoned in the tower for six months on suspicion of complicity in the attempt of his father to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. The name of Amye, Lady Dudley, is mentioned as visiting him there, so in the fourth year of their marriage she was in London, and there was no estrangement. Being

released, his wife's and his own estates were restored him, and out of gratitude to Queen Mary's Consort, Philip, he offered his services to the King, who sent him to fight the French. Here the separation was compulsory, for Amy could scarcely follow her husband serving in a foreign army upon the continent. We hear nothing of either for the space of three years, and an extant letter proves that Amye and Sir Robert were still upon a familiar and friendly, if not affectionate footing. She is found to be entrusted with full power and authority to sell and dispose of profits of the lands so that creditors need no longer wait for their money. The terms of the letter evidently prove she had sanction for her actions, and that there was no estrangement, and this letter, referring as it does to Sydistene, must have been written in 1557 at the earliest, as the property did not come to their hands before that year. It is dated from Mr. Hydes, a connection of Dudleys, who lived at Denchworth, a few miles from Cumnor; and while Amy was visiting here she was at perfect freedom to go where she would, and had full control of money which she seemingly availed herself of, as the Longleat papers fully prove. She was certainly under no

restraint, having no less than twelve horses at her service. She amused herself journeying in Suffolk, Hampshire, and Lincolnshire; she also went to London and Dudley being at Windsor, she also visited Camberwell, and her charges for Mr. Hydes to that place is entered at £10.

Many of her accounts are at Longleat, and inside one bill was found a letter written at Cumnor, but undated; it is probably one of the last she ever wrote, being written 24th August This bill was not paid for some years after her death, for which reason "nothing was abated." Among the items charged were:—

> "For making a Spanish gowne of Russet Damask, 16s. For 6 ounces of Lace at 4s 8d. an ounce, 28s. 8s. for making a loose gown of Rosse Taffata (alluded to in the letter),"

and many other items which show that this freedom of expenditure must have existed to the very last. There is charged in the same bill an article supplied after her death, viz., a mantle of cloth for the chief mourner.

In such manner then was Amy occupied at Cumnor, where not improbably the gossip about Dudley's intimacy with the queen was repeated to her. Whether she believed it or not it is

impossible to say, but we may be sure that if all the rumours then floating about did reach her, the effect must have been terrible, especially if the suggestion that she was suffering from cancer, and that Dudley anxiously awaited her death to marry the queen became known to her. But these rumours would have been far more likely to act as a preventative to actual crime than as an incentive. A sudden, and in especial a violent death, would have been the last thing that Dudley would have wished to happen to her, and when it did happen, as most inopportunely it did for him, he appears to have used every endeavour to ascertain the actual truth, and if a crime had been committed to bring the guilty to justice. Documents in the Pepsyan Library at Cambridge tell us that on Monday, 9th September, Lord Robert Dudley was at Windsor, and hearing that something was amiss at Cumnor, sent thither on horseback Sir Thomas Blount, a confidential friend and retainer. On his road Blount meets a messenger named Bowes, riding post haste to Windsor with the intelligence that the previous evening Lady Dudley had been found lying in the hall at Cumnor Place at the foot of the stairs, dead, but without outward marks

of violence. He further relates that the Sunday being Abingdon fair, Lady Dudley, contrary to the remembrance of Mrs. Hyde and Mrs. Odingsell, Mr. Hyde's sister, had insisted upon all her servants going to the fair. They went accordingly, leaving apparently no one excepting the three females in the house, for no account makes mention of any man in or about the home. Each rider now pursues his journey, and Blount arrives at Abingdon and proceeds to question the landlord as to local events, and hears the death of Lady Dudley confirmed. After a little pressure the landlord expresses his opinion, that it must be a "misfortune" *i.e.* accident, because it happened in that honest gentleman's home, Master Forster. "His honesty doth much curb the evil thoughts of the people." The following day he interviews the lady's maid, who admits she had heard Lady Dudley frequently pray for delivery from desparation, but when Blount seems willing to take this as indicating suicide, she says, "No good, Mr. Blount, do not so judge of my words. If you should so gather I should be sorry I said so much."

Blount writes all these particulars to Dudley, and suggests that from what he has heard Lady

Dudley's mind might have been disordered, and that a Coroner's inquest was sitting. Dudley sent for Appleyard and Arthur Robsart to this inquest, and eventually the jury say, "After the most searching enquiry they could make, they could find no presumption of evil dealing." Lord Robsart then devises a second jury, to whom he sends a message "to deal earnestly, carefully, and truly, and to find as they see it fall out," and to finish the question to the fullest. Unfortunately the records of the Coroner's enquiry have not survived. The late A. D. Bartlett, Coroner for Abingdon, endeavoured to find them, but abandoned his search in despair.

In 1566, seven years after Amy's death, Dudley's marriage with the queen was debated by the Privy Council, when it was reported to them that Appleyard, had in a moment of irritation against Leicester, said he had not been satisfied with the verdict, but for the sake of Dudley had covered the murder of his sister. Appleyard was cited to appear and explain his words to the Privy Council, which he did by saying that he did not hold Dudley guilty, but thought it would not be difficult to find out the guilty parties. Here says Mr. Froude, if Appleyard spoke the

truth, there is no more to be said : the conclusion seems inevitable, that though Dudley was innocent of direct influence, the unhappy lady was sacrificed to his ambition and made away with by persons who hoped to profit by Dudley's elevation to the throne. "If Appleyard spoke the truth," says Mr. Froude—I will however quote from a letter found by Canon Jackson at Longleat. It is from a Berkshire gentleman to Mr. John Thynne of Longleat, dated June 9th, 1567. After mentioning other matters, he continues, "On Friday in the Star-Chamber, was Appleyard brought forth, who shewed himself a malytyous beast, for he dyd confesse the accused my Lord of Leicester only of malyes, and he hath byn about it these three years, and now, because he could not go through with his business to promote, he fell into this rage against my lord and would have accused him of three things. 1st, of kyllyng his wyf. 2nd, of sending the Lord Derby to Scotland. 3rd, for letting the queen of marriage. He craved pardon for all these things. My Lord Keeper answered in King Henry VII. days there was one lost his ears for slandering the Chief Justice ; so as I think his ende will be the pillory."

Mr. Froude therefore is answered by this letter. Appleyard did not speak truth, but as early as 1567, and even three years earlier, the libel is traced to have originated with him from personal motives of disappointment and revenge. He acknowledged himself a liar, but whether this retraction was from fear of the Star Chamber cannot be ascertained; at any rate the private opinion of Sir Henry Neville was that he merited the pillory. He must have been a contemptible rascal in any case, for even if the libel was true and fear caused him to retract, this was no excuse for his conduct on the occasion of his sister's funeral. This he attended, and in the procession bore a banner of arms. Sir Henry Nevill must have judged and described him correctly. Taking the evidence into consideration, I must certainly express my own impression is that whatever may have been Leicester's faults, and they were many, or whatever crimes may be charged against him, he was at any rate guiltless of any intent to make away with his wife Amy. Even if Dudley were shielded in his evil doings by his court influence, would this have also affected public opinion in the country? I am of opinion that at that time his court popularity would

have militated rather unfavourably than otherwise for him. Yet what do we find is the case? Within four years of his wife's death, he is elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Steward of the Boroughs of Abingdon, Wallingford, and Reading, all within easy distance of Cumnor Place, where his wife Amye was found dead at the foot of the stair, as some said foully murdered. Had he a hand, direct or indirect, in such a crime, or had suspicion then attached to him, I venture to affirm neither Oxford University nor the electors of these Boroughs would have so honoured him. The nominations must have been practically a declaration of confidence in his innocence. Poor Amy Robsart's death was indeed a sad one, but at least we may conclude that it was not hastened by neglect nor accomplished by violence on the part of her husband. In spite of all attempts to assert this truth, the story of her romance will live, and continue to add a pathetic interest to the quiet Berkshire village which preserves her memory.

# Alfred the Great.

By W. H. Thompson.

"You are a writer and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow
Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally
skilful!"—*Longfellow.*

THIS terse, but sincere and enthusiastic eulogium, on the memory of Julius Cæsar by that stout Puritan, Captain Miles Standish, comes instinctively to the mind, as one contemplates the life of good King Alfred. It is not given to many to be alike famous as sovereign, warrior, lawgiver, and author; but such was Alfred, the first of England's great monarchs. If it is the "cunning," the knowing, or able man, as Carlyle tells us, who is the "king" by Divine right; here was the Saxon king *par excellence.* His lineage was of the most ancient and illustrious; his father Ethelwulf traced his descent from the most renowned of the Saxon heroes, and his mother Osburga was descended from famous Gothic progenitors. Born at the royal manor of Vanathing (Wantage) in the year 849, the

youngest of Ethelwulf's four legitimate sons, he was his father's darling, the fairest and most promising of all his boys. This is doubtless the explanation of the fact that, whilst yet a mere

KING ALFRED THE GREAT.

child, he accompanied his sire on a pilgrim journey to Rome. How far this pilgrimage and the impressions which he received from his sojourn

in what was still the greatest and most civilized city in Europe, may have influenced his after-life and character it is impossible to say; but the earliest story related of Alfred treats of his aptitude for learning and his love for poetry and books. He learned to read before his elder brothers, and even before he could read he had learned by heart many Anglo-Saxon poems, by hearing the minstrels and gleemen recite them in his father's hall. And his passionate love for letters never forsook him.

Much, however, as he might have preferred it, there was another life than that of the mere student and scholar laid up in store for this noble Saxon. One after another his three elder brothers, Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethelred, occupied the throne, and it was on the death of the last named, in 871, in the twenty-second year of his age, that reluctantly Alfred had to shut up his books, and take up the sceptre and the sword. He now comes before us as

(1). The warrior king.

Never did English monarch ascend the throne in darker days. Recently, it is true, the Saxons had come off victors against the Norsemen in one bloody field—the battle of Ashdune, near Reading,

—but this dearly bought victory had in turn been succeeded by a series of discomfitures and defeats, the pagan armies having received fresh and continued re-inforcements. It was in one of these sanguinary conflicts that Ethelred received the wound which, though not immediately fatal, was yet the cause of his death. It was a period of prolonged devastation, misery, and rapine. Nine pitched battles were fought in the course of one short year, and the minor skirmishes were innumerable; the internecine conflict being conducted with the most savage ferocity. Prisoners were never spared, unless it was to extort a heavy ransom; and the countryside was everywhere given up to fire and sword. It is not surprising that Alfred, although already distinguished for his military valour, had not sought the crown. Kingship in those times was no sinecure.

Dark, however, as were the clouds when Alfred came to the throne, still gloomier days were in store. The Norsemen, already masters of all Northumbria, had also practically reduced the kingdom of Mercia; and they were now especially directing their attention to Wessex, the country of the West Saxons. With varying success Alfred confronted the enemy during the opening

years of his reign; but he soon discovered that, though he might make treaties with his perfidious foes, they never dreamed of permanently abiding by them; and if he succeeded in withstanding them one year, like fresh clouds of locusts, new re-inforcements appeared on the scene, every spring and summer, from Scandinavia. In the depth of winter (A.D. 878), when it was not anticipated that they would pursue their military operations, the Danes made a sudden irruption into Wiltshire and the adjoining shires, and so utterly discomforted the Saxons, that Alfred, almost wholly deprived of his authority, was driven with a small but trusty band of followers, and his old mother Osburga, into Athelney, a secluded spot at the confluence of the Thone and the Parrett, surrounded by moors and marshes, which served at once for his concealment and his defence. Great were the hardships which Alfred here endured; his life was that of an outlaw. For daily sustenance he largely depended upon chance and accident, hunting the wild-deer, and even seizing by force the stores of the enemy. It is of this period of terrible privation that the oft-told tale of the good-wife's cakes is related. Yet all his misfortunes

neither damped his courage, nor subdued his energy.

ALFRED'S JEWEL.

A most curious and interesting memento of this time has come down to us. The king wore an ornament, probably fastened to a necklace, made of gold and enamel, which being lost by him at Athelney, was found there entire and undefaced in the seventeenth century. It is now preserved at Oxford in the Ashmolean Museum. The inscription which surrounds the ornament: "ALFRED HET MEH GEWIRCAN" (Alfred caused me to be worked) affords the most authentic testimony of its origin.

But meanwhile the men of Wessex had gained a signal victory. Bjorn-Ironside and Hubba, who attempted to land in Devonshire, were killed with many of their followers; and the news reaching Alfred in his seclusion at Athelney, he

forthwith determined upon bolder operations. Disguising himself as a glee-man or minstrel, he stole into the camp of the Danes, and was gladly received by the rude viking chiefs as one who increased their mirth and jollity. And so skillfully did Alfred maintain his disguise, that none suspected that he was merely playing a part. He was enabled to learn what he desired, the strength and position of the Norsemen; and having ascertained this, he returned to Athelney, unscathed and unharmed.

He now began to gather an army around him, and it was not long before he felt himself strong enough to confront the foe. Sallying forth, he met the Danes at a spot called Ethandune (probably Eddindon, near Westbury), and, after a murderous conflict, the English were left masters of the field. Though victorious, however, Alfred could not altogether expel the Danes. He was obliged to cede an extensive territory to the invaders and to Guthrun, their leader; viz., from the mouth of the Lea to its source, thence to Bedford, and along the Ouse to Watling Street, or the ancient Roman road; and this territory, together with Northumbria, became henceforth known by the name of the Danelagh, or Danelaw.

In East Anglia, and in the portions of Essex and Mercia thus ceded, the Danes settled and established themselves, not as enemies, but as vassals to Alfred. They appear to have become tired of their life of barbarism. Guthrun also embraced Christianity, and the treaty which he made with the English he maintained with integrity. In Northumbria, whilst the English had been induced to accept the Danish Guthred as their sovereign, Guthred, in turn, acknowledged the suzerainty of Alfred as his superior lord. He also continued true and faithful.

Thus Alfred, although he did not succeed in totally subjugating the Danes, by following up the signal advantage he gained at the battle of Ethandune, accomplished great things. In the course of seven years after his restoration, he was acknowledged as paramount monarch of Britain south of the Humber; Mercia was virtually under his dominion, and Wessex, the wealthiest and best favoured portion of the island, entirely, as well as in name, was under his royal sway.

Yet, whilst he had made peace with the Norse who had settled in England, Alfred had by no means come to the end of his troubles. The Saxon Chronicle records a series of constantly

recurring attacks from the sea-roving Danes, who continued to harass the coasts. Into the details of these it is unnecessary to enter. But having once become the master of England, Alfred never relaxed his vigilance; he had London strongly fortified, and constructed a navy. One of the greatest feats of his later life was his victory over the famous Hasting, ablest of all the sea-kings; whose rout was so complete that he was pleased to escape from England with his life. The campaign against Hasting was the last great military achievement of our Saxon hero.

(2). The poet and scholar.

Not only was Alfred the first warrior, but he was also the foremost scholar in his dominions. This may be easily gathered from Asser's interesting memoirs. The King was an elegant poet, and wrote numbers of Saxon ballads, which were sung or recited in all parts of the country. In his original poems, the extent of his knowledge is not more surprising than the purity of his taste, and the simple yet classical beauty of his style. It is highly probable that Alfred diligently studied the Latin tongue between his twelfth and eighteenth years, and that he had a few Latin books with him during his Athelney seclusion. He was

accustomed to say that he regretted the imperfect education of his youth, and the want of proper teachers, which barred his intellectual progress. But whatever the difficulties he may have had to surmount (and it is almost impossible to exaggerate them), the fact remains that his literary works shew a proficiency in the classic tongue, which appears almost miraculous in a prince in that dark age. It was probably shortly after making peace with Guthrun, that he invited Asser, the learned monk of St. David's, to his court, to assist him in his studies. Asser was a scholar after Alfred's own heart. The monk tells us that the King's first attempt at translation was made upon the Bible, a book which no man ever held in greater reverence than did the princely student. Asser and the King were engaged in pleasant conversation, and it so chanced that the monk quoted a passage from the Bible with which Alfred was much struck. At Asser's request the King called for a clean skin of parchment, and this being folded into fours, in the shape of a little book, the passage from the Scriptures was written upon it in Latin, together with other good texts. The monarch, setting to work upon these passages, translated them into

the Saxon speech. This was the beginning of his translation of the Bible.

Nothing is more astonishing in the story of the the great Englishman than that he could find time for literary occupations; but he was steady and persevering, and rigidly systematic. When not in the field against the Norsemen, his rule was, eight hours for sleep, eight for the affairs of state, eight for study and devotion. His mind was ever open to receive fresh information. He took a continued delight in obtaining the details and particulars of strange and foreign lands. Before Alfred, nothing was practically known of the greater outside world by the Anglo-Saxons. But the King drew around him a number of bold and adventurous spirits, men, who had travelled far, and he revelled in the stories which they recited of their own experiences, and the information which they had gleaned of still more remote lands, which they themselves had not seen. One of these was Othere, who had been far north into the Arctic circle, another was Wulfstan, who took a voyage round the Baltic, and gathered many strange and interesting facts concerning those climes. All the information which he collected, the King committed to

writing in the plain mother tongue, and in enlarging the text of the Spanish chronicler, Orosius, whose work he translated, he introduced the voyages of Othere and Wulfstan.

Having heard stories of the east, possibly from Johannes Scotus, who came to his court, and who had been in the far and distant Orient; and learning that there were colonies of Christians settled on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, Alfred decided to send out his trusted friend, Swithelm, Bishop of Sherburn, to India. Probably his motives were mixed feelings of devotion for Christianity, and a desire for increased geographical knowledge. Anyhow the stout-hearted churchman set out on this, what in those days must have been a tremendous journey; one which then had probably never been made by any other Englishman before. What is more, he succeeded in reaching India and returning safely back again, bringing with him presents of spices and gems. Thus was Alfred's fame increased, and the existence of England made known, probably for the first time, in that empire where to-day the Saxon holds sovereign sway.

No Englishman of the Saxon period, except

the venerable Bede, can be compared with Alfred for the extent and excellence of his writings. His works may be classified into two divisions; translations from the Latin, and original works in the mother tongue. Of the first the chief were, (1) Orosius' History; (2) St. Gregory's Pastorals; (3) St. Gregory's Dialogues; (4) Bede's History; (5) Boethiv's Consolations of Philosophy; (6) Laws of the Mercians; (7) Asser's Sentences; (8) The Psalms of David. Of the second, (1) An Abridgement of Laws of the Trojans, the Greek, the Britons, the Saxons, and the Danes; (2) Laws of the West Saxons; (3) Institutes; (4) A book against unjust Judges; (5) Sayings of the Wise; (6) A book on the fortunes of Kings; (7) Parables and Jokes; (8) Acts of Magistrates; (9) Collection of Chronicles; (10) Manual of Meditations.

(3). The Law-giver.

Great as he truly was as a warrior, it was in the arts of peace that Alfred pre-eminently excelled. In every interval of repose allowed by his Norsemen foes, he occupied his mind in devising means for the improvement of the moral and physical condition of the people. He introduced the use of stone for building purposes

and taught them how to erect houses such as he had seen in Rome and Milan. He never re-built a town without giving it a good capacious school, and he was also a great founder and restorer of churches and monasteries. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that he occupied himself largely with matters pertaining to legislation. Whenever he re-edified a town, he gave the people rules for re-modelling their municipal institutions, thus training them for self-government. As will be perceived from the list given above, his original writings were largely made up of abridgements of laws and the like. Of course there had been legal codes in existence in England before the days of Alfred. Ethelbert, King of Kent; Ina, King of Wessex; Offa, King of Mercia; besides other, had promulgated codes of law, or dooms; but all law and order had been destroyed during the dark times of the Danish inroads. Alfred collected the codes of his predecessors, and without apparently adding much of his own, compiled a very intelligible and consistent system of laws, which he submitted to the Witenagemot for sanction. Alfred was not a great advocate of innovation; as he states, he thought it better to allow an old law to stand in force, even if it were

somewhat defective, rather than endanger the respect for constituted authority. His ideal was simplicity of construction, combined with impartiality of administration. According to Asser, he exercised vigilant supervision over the judges; the courts were improved, and a general legal reform took place all round. With that religiousness characteristic of the man, and recognising that if all the divine laws were duly observed, there would be but little necessity for those of human origin, he opened his code with the ten commandments, a selection from the Mosaic precepts, and clauses of the first apostolic councils. "Do these," he said, "and no other doom-book will be needed."

In summing up Alfred's character it would not be fair to seek to hide his faults. His was not that ideal perfection which some of his panegyrists would have us believe. He had his faults and failings, some of which adhered to him during the whole of his life. He continued, for instance, more fond of warfare than was consistent with the duty of a Christian monarch. Still, he possessed within him the only germs of real improvement, a consciousness of his own imperfections and insufficiency. And when we

compare him with his contemporaries, after making all allowance for his shortcomings, still the true greatness of his character remains untouched. His achievements stand out all the more markedly, when it is considered that all his bodily and mental activities were carried on under the depressing influences of constant ill-health and physical pain. About the age of twenty, he was affected with an inward malady, the nature of which was beyond the knowledge of the physicians of the times. This disease never quitted him, it haunted him life long.

Whatever his minor faults may have been, no monarch who has had the title of "Great" attached to his name, has ever been more worthy of it. All historians combine in representing him as one of the noblest sovereigns that ever wore a crown. The shepherd of his people, "the darling of the English;" whose praises the Laureate has lately sung, the industrious prince, expired in the month of November, 901, on the festival of S.S. Simon and Jude, in the fifty-third year of his age, and was buried at Winchester, in a monastery he himself had founded. His memory is still preserved at his native place, Wantage. The site of the royal palace of the

Wessex kings is pointed out in the High Garden, and a magnificent statue of "England's darling," executed by Count Gleichen in Sicilian marble has been presented to the town by Lord Wantage, and erected in the Market Place. Alfred's laurels will not fail while England lasts.

# The Guilds of Berkshire.

By the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A.

IN studying the history of our progress and civilization, we find no subject more interesting than the nature and constitution of certain associations which have played no small part in the making of England—the ancient guilds. At one time they exercised almost universal sway, and in small country villages, as well as in the towns and cities, there were few who did not belong to some guild. We find in them the origin of many of the privileges and institutions which we now enjoy; from them arose the municipal corporations of our towns; and by them were our trade and commerce protected in times of lawlessness and oppression.

The whole subject of the early history of guilds is shrouded in obscurity. What was the origin of the early religious guilds; how the frith guilds came into existence; the relation of the merchant guilds to the craft guilds; how far the government of the town was placed in the hands of the

former; and when the merchant guild became the sole governing body, the forerunner of the municipal corporation—all these are questions, the answers to which can only be conjectured.

The word guild is probably derived from the Saxon word *geldan* or *gildan*, which means "to pay," and signifies that the members of the association were required to contribute something towards the support of the brotherhood to which they belonged. The early guilds were of the nature of clubs, and consisted of bodies of men united together under oath for their mutual benefit, and for a common purpose. The character and nature of these clubs differed widely, and I will state as briefly as possible the various kinds of guilds which have existed in our country. In Roman times there were the *collegia opificum* which were firmly established in this country during the period of the Roman occupation. These colleges were corporations which could hold property, had regular constitutions, presidents and senators, treasurers and sub-treasurers, priests and temples. Each had its *curia*, or senate house, its common *arca*, or chest, its archives and banners. It constituted a kind of "Sick and Burial Club" for its members,

and on two special days—*dies violarum* and *dies rosæ*—the sodales met at the sepulchre of departed brethren to commemorate their loss, and to deck their tombs with violets and roses, an offering pleasing to the spirit of the *manes*, at Silchester, when it was a large and flourishing city, there would certainly be such a college or corporation.

During the Anglo Saxon period guilds certainly flourished in this country, and since Reading was, as Asser states, a royal city, and an important centre of the West Saxon kingdom, there was, doubtless, an Anglo Saxon guild here;* but few traces of Saxon Reading remain, as the place was completely destroyed by the Danes. When we examine the rules and regulations of the Saxon guilds, we are astonished at the high state of civilisation which they disclose. They resembled in some respects our modern friendly societies, and provided a scheme of mutual assurance for the members. I will take the Exeter guild for

* Mr. Coates says that the Society of Guild Merchants of Reading was undoubtedly very ancient, existing before the foundation of the Abbey, and claiming a charter or grant of privileges from Edward the Confessor.

This is proved by a statement made by the Mayor and commonalty in time of Richard II., before the king's justices of peace at Reading, in opposition to some of the claims of the Abbot, with whom the authorities of the town were always quarrelling.

an example, which, as in the case of all these early guilds, was of a religious type. At a meeting held in the city of Exeter "for the sake of God and our souls, that we may make such ordinances as tend to our welfare and security, as well in this life as in that future state which we wish to enjoy in the presence of God, our Judge, therefore, here assembled, we have decreed :—

"That three stated meetings shall be held every year. 1st, on Festival of St. Michael the Archangel; 2nd, on Feast of St. Mary, next following winter solstice; and 3rd, on Feast of All Saints', which is celebrated after Easter.

"That at every meeting every member shall contribute two sextaria of barley meal, and every knight, one, together with his quota of honey.

"That at each meeting a priest shall sing two masses; one for living, the other for the dead. Every lay brother shall sing two psalms: one for living, and other for departed members. Every-one shall moreover in his turn procure six masses and six psalms, to be sung at his own proper expense.

"That when any member is about to go abroad, each of his fellow members shall contribute

5d. : and if any member's house shall have been burned, one penny."

Fines were inflicted for non-attendance, for abusive conduct, and "finally we beseech every member, for God's sake, to observe these things which are ordained in this society, in everything, as we have ordained them, and may God help us to observe them."

Mr. Toulmin Smith writes thus concerning these old Saxon guilds:—"The early English guild was an institution of local self-help, which, before Poor-laws were invented, took the place, in old times, of the modern friendly societies, but with a higher aim; while it joined all classes together in a care for the needy, and for objects of common welfare, it did not neglect the form and practice of religion, justice, and morality."

One of the objects of the London guild (tenth century) was the recovery of stolen stock and slaves, and if these could not be recovered the brethren subscribed to make up the loss to the owner. A horse was valued at $\frac{1}{2}$ pound, a cow at 20d., a hog at 10d., a sheep at 1s., a slave at $\frac{1}{2}$ pound. If the slave *has stolen himself* he shall be stoned, and every brother shall subscribe 1d. or $\frac{1}{2}$d. to make good the loss. Whether there was

ever a Danish guild in Reading it is impossible to determine. There was a noted one at Abbotsbury (Dorset), founded by Orcy, a friend of King Canute, 1030 A.D. The guild ordinance is quoted in Kemble's "Saxons in England," p. 511.

The brethern were required to contribute wax, bread, wheat, and wood. The wax was for the maintainance of lights in the Minster. Members were required to contribute to the comforts of the dying, and to attend the burial and pray for the souls of departed members.

We have a picture of later Saxon Reading recorded in the pages of Doomsday Book. It contained only thirty homesteads, with two better class of houses, two mills, and two fisheries. The Danes had attacked it a second time in 1006, and it had not recovered from that disaster; so in such a small community, although a guild at this period existed, it must have been a very small company indeed.

But after the Conquest guilds began to multiply, and were established for the purpose of promoting religion, charity, and trade. There were the frith guilds, formed for the promotion of peace, and the establishment of law and order:

the religious guilds, which used to hold a festival on the day of the patron saint of the guild, attend church, and perform a miracle play. In the *Liber Niger*, or *Black Book*, of the Corporation of London, there is a description of the anniversary feast of the guild of the Holy Cross at Abingdon. "The fraternity hold their feast on May 3rd, the invention of the Holy Cross; and then they used to have 12 priests to sing a *Dirge*, for which they paid 4d. apiece; thay had also 12 minstrels, who had 2s. 3d. besides their dyet and horse meat. In 1445 they had 6 calves at 2s. 2d. each, 16 lambs at 12d., 80 capons at 3d., 80 geese at 2d., 800 eggs which cost 5d. the hundred, and many marrow bones, cream, and flour; and pageants, plays, and May games to captivate the senses of the beholders." This was a strong and powerful guild, formed in 1389, and incorporated in 1442, being endowed with lands for the purpose of keeping in order the roads between Abingdon and Dorchester, and building an almshouse. In 1539 they erected an aisle in St. Helen's Church, Abingdon, and also a market cross of freestone, pronounced by Leland "to be not inferior in workmanship to many in England." The hospital of the brotherhood of the Holy

Cross still remains. It was founded in the middle of the fourteenth century, a very interesting low brick and timber house, containing several good paintings.

Then there were the guilds of the Kalendars, which were principally composed of the clergy, and one of their duties was to keep a public record of events, to superintend and regulate a library open to all citizens, and to explain to those who required such assistance, any difficulties that may arise in these matters. They, too, did not forget the periodical feasts. Then there were social guilds, composed chiefly of laymen, for objects of good fellowship, benovelence, and thrift.

And now we come to a very important class, the Merchant guilds. These existed in Saxon times, and were formed for promoting the interests of particular trades, for the regulation of industry, for buying and selling; and very strict were the laws which they enforced, and merciless the restrictions which they placed upon all strangers who presumed to sell goods, and who did not belong to the guild. We shall notice some particular instances of these harsh rules which were in force in the town of Reading.

I find in the Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission that there were five companies of the guild Mercatory at Reading. Originally these companies were separate institutions, which managed their own concerns, and were not concerned with the Municipal Government of the town. There were five wards, each ward having a trade guild attached to it. In course of time the guilds united for common purposes and formed the guild Mercatory, which asked and received charters from various kings, gradually acquired powers, privileges, lands, and property, and ultimately managed the whole municipal business, as well as their own trade concerns.

In regard to these guilds the first was the mercers' and drapers' company, which included the mercers, drapers, haberdashers, potuaries (or dealers in earthenware), chapmen, tailors, and cloth-drawers,

Of course no one was allowed to engage in any of these trades until he became a member of the guild; and to become a member he had to pay. The fines for admission varied from £4 for a mercer or draper, to £2 for a tailor. Very minute were the regulations of each guild. For

example in this case, no "foreigner," not a member of the guild, was allowed to retail cloth in the town; for each offence he was required to pay 10s. One tradesman might not trespass on the privileges of another tradesman, for no mercer or tailor might retail cloth or woven hose, under penalty of 3s. 4d. each time, for that would interfere with the cloth-makers and haberdashers. No tailor might employ a journeyman to work except he gave him meat, drink, wages, and lodgings in his own house. Here is a curious regulation—no haberdasher, not being a freeman, was allowed to sell caps or hats (except straw hats) on forfeiture of 12d.

The second company was the cutlers and bell-founders company, which included seventeen other trades; besides cutlers and bell-founders, there were braziers, pewterers, smiths, pinners, barbers, carpenters, joiners, fletchers (arrow-makers), wheelers, basket-makers, coopers, sawyers, bricklayers, card-makers (*i.e.*, wool combers' cards), turners, plumbers, painters, and glaziers. The barbers were subject to special regulations. No barber who was a stranger was allowed to draw teeth in any part of the town except in a barber's shop; and any barber

shaving, trimming, dressing, or cutting any person on Sunday, except on the four fair days, should forfeit for each time, 12d.

The following curious bye-law was made by the Corporation in 1443, at the commencement of the dispute between the rival Houses of York and Lancaster, and was probably intended to prevent unlawful meetings taking place under the mask of a barber's shop. "The Mayor and burgesses of Reading, grant and ordain that from this time forward, no barber of Reading open any shop nor shave any man after ten of the clock at night, between Easter and Michaelmas, nor after nine of the clock at night, from Michaelmas to Easter, but if (*i.e.*, except) it be any stranger or worthy man (*i.e.*, gentleman) of this town, he shall pay 300 tiles to the Guildhall of Reading, as often times he is found faulty, to be received by the cofferers for the time being."

Perhaps some of my readers may be astonished at the peculiar form of this fine. It is not usual to pay fines in this form of *tiles!* But it may be accounted for by the fact that thatch was beginning to be superseded by tile roofs. The public buildings were roofed with lead, but almost all private houses were thatched. Hence there

was much danger from fire, and the Corporation wisely determined to encourage the employment of a safer material for the roofing of Reading houses. The poor barbers had to pay their fines in tiles, and very soon we find that one John Bristol was fined 2,100 tiles for shaving seven persons contrary to the order, but the number of tiles was reduced to 1,200 on account of his poverty.

The fine for disobedience or ill-behaviour was often enforced in this curious medium. One John Bristow, in the reign of Henry VI., was fined 4,000 tiles for disobedience to the Mayor, but the fine was reduced to 1,000, with a sufficient quantity of lime. Any person who should quarrel was ordered to pay to the Church of St. Giles, six pounds of wax, and to the Guildhall, 500 tiles.

The third company was the tanners and leather sellers' company, including also the shoemakers, curriers, glewers, saddlers, jerking sellers, bottle-makers, collar-makers, and cobblers.

In the rules of this company we find certain regulations which show that while the guild afforded protection to the the tradesmen, it also acted the part of a somewhat severe tyrant.

Here is a very severe enactment which might seem somewhat opposed to the freedom of our times. No shoemaker was allowed to make any boots or shoes in any part of the town, but only in Shoemakers' Row, that is to say on the east side of the street, from the Forbury Gate to the Hallowed Brook, under pain of forfeiting 3s. 4d. each time. No one was allowed to go and work where he pleased, but only in the part of the town prescribed by the guild. This company seem to have been the chief promoters of bull baiting and bear baiting, since there is a rule forbidding these sports to be held on the Sabbath day during service, on pain of 12d., to be paid by each householder where the baiting is.

The fourth company was that of the clothiers, an important industry in old Reading; and this included the dyers, weavers, sheermen, shuttle-makers, and ash-burners.

No clothier was allowed to use more than two looms, but Mr. Aldworth, who was a privileged person, might have four. No clothier might weave cloth for another clothier. There are sundry other regulations, which show the severity of the company's laws.

The victuallers' company embraced the

vintners, innholders, bakers, brewers, butchers, fishmongers, chandlers, maltmakers, flax-dressers, salters, and woodmongers.

The rules of this company do not, I believe, appear in the Corporation documents, but from other sources we find that the members of the guild were strictly enjoined to observe Lent, and were forbidden to kill or dress meat in that season without a license from the Abbot. Also to prevent imposition on the part of the publicans, two ale tasters were appointed to set the price of beer. The Corporation in former days performed a duty from which the present members of the municipal council would doubtless shrink. It assumed the power of regulating the price of such articles as beer and bread. In the time of Edward VI. a quart of best beer could be obtained for 1d.

These, then, were the five companies which formed the old guild Mercatory of Reading. They did not form (as Mr. Man says in his History of the town) "a society of mechanics and merchants without pretending to interfere in the government of the borough." In fact the guild was rather aristocratic in its tendency, and later on we find that the lower class of tradesfolk

formed craft guilds in order to protect the interests of the artizans and smaller tradesmen. Of these the higher guild was very jealous, and frequently exerted its power to oppress the craftsmen and their guild. In the history of nearly every borough we find instances of contention and jealousies between the two bodies. One instance of this occurred in the year 1662, "when the cobblers petition to the Corporation against the shoemakers for mending and repairing old ware in violation of the ancient orders of the borough."

It seems strange to us to think of the time when a man could not sell what he liked, or live where he liked, or work at any trade he pleased; but such freedom was impossible under the old guilds. No one could ply his trade in a town unless he was a freeman of the company; *e.g.*, "in July, 1545, one Robert Hooper, a barber, being a foreigner, was this day ordered to be gone out of the town at his peril, with his wife and children," and the town sergeants were ordered to shut up his shop and see poor Robert Hooper and his wife beyond the borough boundaries. And the distinction between the various trades, between the carpenters and

joiners, between the joiners and sawyers, and as we have seen between cobblers and shoemakers, and the privileges of each class were jealously guarded. Absurd as these restrictions were, the early guilds contributed greatly to the making of England. Green thus writes of them :—"In the silent growth and elevation of the English people the borough led the way. The rights of self-government, of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's equals, were brought safe across the ages of Norman tyranny by the traders and shopkeepers of the towns. In the quiet, quaintly-named streets, in town mead, and market place, in the Lord's mill besides the stream, in the bell that sounded out its summons to the borough moot, in the jealousies of craftsmen and guilds, lay the real life of Englishmen, the life of their home and trade, their ceaseless sober struggle with oppression, their steady unwearied battle for self-government."

Again, speaking of the policy of Edward I., who built up the power of the towns in view of checking the lawless tendencies of the barons, he says :—

"The bell which swung out from the town tower gathered the burgesses to a common

meeting, where they could exercise their rights of free speech and free deliberation on their own affairs. Their merchants' guild, over its ale-feast, regulated trade, distributed the sums due from the different burgesses, looked to the repair of the gate and wall, and acted in fact pretty much the same part as a Town Council of to-day. Not only were all these rights secured by custom from the first, but they were constantly widening as time went on. Whenever we get a glimpse of the inner history of an English town, we find the same peaceful revolution in progress, services disappearing through disuse or omission, while privileges and immunities were being purchased in hard cash. The lord of the town, whether he were king, abbot, or baron, was commonly thriftless or poor, and the capture of a noble, or the campaign of a sovereign, or the building of some new minster by a prior, brought about an appeal to the thrifty burghers, who were ready to fill again their master's treasury, at the price of a strip of parchment, which gave them freedom of trade, of justice, and of government. For the most part the liberties of our towns were bought in this way by sheer hard bargaining."

We have observed the numerous charters

granted to Reading. The charter of Henry III., to which his successor refers, is the earliest known one, and in that we find the words :—

"Henry, by the grace of God, King of England, etc., to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, etc., greeting. Know ye that we will, and command for ourself and our heirs, that all the burgesses of Reading *who belong to the guild Merchant in Reading* may be for ever free from all shires and hundred courts, and from all pleas, complaints, tolls, passages, ways, carriage ways, and that they may buy and sell wheresoever they will throughout all England, without paying toll, and no one may disturb them under forfeiture of 10 marks." This was confirmed by Edward I., and by successive kings. These charters were granted to the guild, the immediate predecessor of the corporation, the "warden" of the guild ultimately being called the "mayor."

But there was a great opponent to the rights and freedom of the good citizens of Reading in the person of the high and mighty Lord Abbot. Referring to the original charter of the abbey granted by Henry I., we see what extensive sway was placed in the hands of the abbot. He ruled Reading with a powerful hand, and when a

former mayor of this town, in the time of Henry VI., thought he would like to have a mace carried before him as a badge of office, the abbot objected. The mayor appealed to the Crown, but he was told it was contrary to the franchise and liberties of our church and monastery, that he was only a keeper of the guild at Reading, admitted by the abbot, and might only have "two tipped staffs" carried before him as a badge of office.

The extensive powers given to the abbot produced constant struggles for power between the guild and the ecclesiastical rulers. Sometimes they even came to blows, and the townsmen often assaulted the abbot's bailiffs in the execution of their duty. The men of Reading were cited in the reign of Henry III., 1243, to show what warrant they had for any privileges which they claimed as members of the guild. The sheriff of Berks received a strict injunction to prevent the men of Reading from interfering with the abbot's lawful rights. Two years later "a final and endly concord" was established between the contending parties, but in 1351, the dispute revived; quarrels arose about the election of a constable for the town, and the

contention was not settled for 200 years. In 1430, abbot Henley seized from the guild the out-butchery, or shambles, used by butchers not living in the town, which was another bone of contention.

The abbot received part of the fines paid by those who wished to become freemen of the guild. He received a fine of 5d., called chepin-gravel yearly from every member. He exercised criminal jurisdiction, tried prisoners, admitted and selected the warden or mayor, and in many ways held powerful sway over the good folk of this ancient borough.

But the day came when his power ceased, and the abbey was dissolved. By degrees the guild obtained more power, but the Reformation shook the fabrics of the old guilds of England, and they found that they had only exchanged masters, and that the new master was rather more masterful than the old, requiring inventories of guild plate, lands, and revenues, and appropriating much of their superfluous wealth to his own exchequer.*

* 1545—By Statute 37 Henry VIII., An Act for dissolution of colleges, it was recited that divers colleges, free chapels, chantries, hospitals, fraternities, brotherhoods, guilds, and stipendary priests, "having perpetuity for ever," had misapplied the possessions thereof in various ways; and it was then enacted that all the same be dissolved and the proceeds applied for supporting the king's expenses in wars, etc., and for the maintenance of the crown, etc.

The advisers of Edward VI. promptly availed themselves of this as a pretext for plunder.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, the guild merchant, the chrysalis, broke its shell, and became the full-winged corporation of mayor and burgesses, although its place of meeting was still called the *Guildhall*, and was situated somewhere near the Hallowed Brook, where the worthy brethren were often disturbed in their deliberations by the Laundry women "beating their battledores," which was the approved style of washing clothes in those days. Subsequently the old Church of Grey Friars became the Guildhall until the old building was erected, from whose ashes the modern Town Hall phœnix-like arose.

The old burgesses, or members of the guild, were very provident. In time of Queen Mary it was ordered that every burgess should pay 20s. over and above his accustomed fine, as a fund for the relief of burgesses in old age or want.

Berkshire has not been remarkable for its guilds. The guild of the brotherhood of the Holy Cross at Abingdon has been already mentioned. At Maidenhead we find a guild incorporated in 1351, probably for the purpose of keeping in repair the bridge over the Thames, one of the most ancient in the county. This corporation was called "the Fraternity or Guild

of the Brothers and Sisters of Maidenhythe." Of minor guilds there would be examples in almost every village and town, but no records of them remain. The guilds of Reading are the only ones of real importance; and I have attempted to point out the chief points of interest in connection with their growth and development, and to describe briefly the origin of these institutions which played so important a part in the making of England.

# The Scouring of the White Horse.

By E. R. Gardiner, M.A.

THE story of our village feasts, and of the way in which the rude forefathers of the hamlet were wont to enjoy themselves, forms a chapter in our manners and customs which cannot but have considerable interest to the student of bygone times. One of the most interesting relics of this kind pertains to the County of Berks. Upon White Horse Hill in that county, there used to be celebrated at stated intervals a feast known throughout the country-side as "The Scouring of the White Horse." This has been so admirably and exhaustively treated by Judge Hughes, Q.C. (Tom Brown) in his well-known book on the subject that it is almost hopeless for anyone writing on the same topic to do otherwise than follow in his wake.

A few words on the history of the White Horse of Berkshire seem necessary as an introduction to the subject, although its origin, like that of the old historic earldom of Mar,

seems to be lost in the mists of antiquity. White Horse Hill is the highest point of the range of chalk hills which the traveller by rail sees on his left hand as he journeys down the Great Western Railway between Didcot and Swindon, and is plainly seen as he approaches Uffington Station. Its summit reaches the height of 856 feet, and commands an extensive view over what is known as the Vale of White Horse, no less than eleven counties being, so it is said, visible therefrom. It derives its name from the rude figure of a horse cut out in the chalk on the north-west side of the hill, some 374 feet long, and with its outline marked by trenches ten feet wide, cut two or three feet deep in the turf to the white subsoil. A very common tradition ascribes its formation to King Alfred, in memory of his decisive victory over the Danes at the battle of Æcesdun, something over a thousand years ago. The tradition has no doubt arisen from the fact that the Saxon standard was a White Horse, the well-known names of Hengist and Horsa being probably mere forms of this ensign. If this were the only turf carving of a similar character to be found in England, there might be a good deal to say in favour of this

SKETCH GROUND PLAN OF THE WHITE HORSE.

tradition. But such figures are not rare, and some of them have, for cogent reasons into which we have not space to enter, been attributed to times far more remote than those of Saxon and Dane. With regard to this particular turf-carving, although we may allow the horse to have been the Saxon standard, and that King Alfred, in setting up "his banner for a token," would only have been following ancient practice, yet, plausible as this may sound, it would have been far more in accordance with what we might have expected had he set up a cross to commemorate his victory. In fact, not so very far away, in the halmet of Monks Risborough in the Chiltern Hills, there is a hill figure of a cross, nearly a hundred feet in height, which, with quite as good if not better reason, is conjectured to be a memorial set up by Alfred, to record a victory over the Danes at Bledlow. And further, the figure of a horse as a badge or device is far older than Saxon times, for on a coin of Cunobelin (the Cymbeline of Shakespeare), who reigned in Britain, A.D. 40, the figure of a horse on its reverse is very similar to the turf-carving with which we are dealing. Indeed, there is much more in favour of these hill-side figures being of a

date far anterior to Saxon or Roman times. For to the right below White Horse Hill is a high mound known as the Dragon Hill upon a piece of ground at the top of which grass does not grow. Here was ample scope for a tradition, which, coupled with the name of the Hill, developed into the story that this was the identical spot on which St. George (or "King Gaarge," according to the rustics) slew the Dragon, and that no verdure ever grew on the place over which its poisonous blood flowed. But unfortunately this derivation collapses when it is found that the name of the Hill should be Pend-ragon, which, in Celtic, signifies "Chief of Kings," and was, as Mr. Wise points out in his letter to Dr. Mead, written in 1736, the common appellation of a British King constituted such by vote in times of public distress. Thus, as we learn from Cæsar's Commentaries Cassibelan was chosen Pendragon by the allies at the time of Julius Cæsar's invasion. So much then for the history and traditions of the White Horse.

The festival called the "Scouring," about which we are more immediately concerned, is, comparatively speaking, a manageable subject, although the aforementioned Mr. Wise, writing

150 years ago, speaks of it as a ceremony, which, "*from time immemorial* has been solemnized by a numerous concourse of people from all the villages round about." The importance which he attaches to it seems to us at this time of day a trifle exaggerated, for, after appealing to all persons who have a regard for ancient customs whether such a solemnity would not deserve the countenance of the nobility and gentry, a sentiment in which many will heartily join, he goes on to suggest that if the festival were solemnized at regular intervals, say of four years, the common people would use it as a mode of reckoning their time, which would then very properly be done by speaking of the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year of the Scouring of the Horse: and not only this, but the worthy author goes on to say he should not despair of its creating a new era in English history, viz., THE RESTORATION OF THE SAXON OLYMPICS. Here surely we have enthusiasm gone mad.

The first Scouring, according to Judge Hughes, Q.C. (who is really *the* authority *par excellence* on the subject), about which there is any authentic information, was held in 1755, and the sports then appeared to be pretty much the same as those held

about a century later. The chief prize for back-sword play, or cudgel play, as it was sometimes called, was won by a stranger, who appeared in the garb of a gentleman, and who held his own against all the old "gamesters," as the backsword players who had won or shared a first prize at any revel, were then called. As soon as he had won the prize, he jumped on his horse, and rode off. There was some speculation as to who he might be, and presently it was whispered about that he was Tim Gibbons, of Lambourn, who had not been seen for some years, and about whom some strange stories had been afloat. A descendant of his, a native of Wodstone, a village which nestles at the foot of the White Horse, gave the following account of his ancestor :—"Timothy Gibbons, my great-grandvather, you see, sir, foller'd black-smithing at Lambourn, till he took to highway robbin', but I can't give 'ee no account o' when or wher'. Arter he'd been out, maybe dree or vour year, he and two companions cum to Baydon; and whilst hiding theirselves and waiting their hopes in a barn, the constables got ropes round the barn-yard and lined 'em in. Then all dree drawed cuts* who was to go out fust and face the

* Drew lots.

constables. It fell to Tim's two companions to go fust, but their hearts failed 'em, and they wouldn't go. So Tim cried out as 'he'd show 'em what a Englishman could do,' and mounted his hos and drawed his cutlash, and cut their lines a-two, and galloped off clean away; but I understood as t'other two was took. Arter that, maybe a year or two, he cum down to a pastime on White Hoss Hill, and won the prize at backswording; and when he took his money, fearing lest he should be knowed, he jumped on his hoss under the stage, and galloped right off, and I don't know as he ever cum again to these parts. Then I've understood as things thrve wi' 'un as 'um will at times, sir, wi' they sort o' chaps, and he and his companions built the inn called 'The Magpies' on Hounslow Heath; but I dwon't know as ever he kep' the house hisself, except it med ha' been for a short while. Howsomever, at last he was took drinking at a public house somewheres up Hounslow way, wi' a companion, who played a crop wi' 'un, and I b'liev' a' was hanged at Newgate. But I never understood as he killed anybody, sir, and a'd used to gie some o' the money as he took to the poor, if he know'd they was in want."

The next Scouring, of which there seems to be

any record, took place in 1776, concerning which the following printed handbill was published :—

"White Horse Hill, Berks, 1776.

The scowering and cleansing of the White Horse is fixed for Monday, the 27th day of May ; on which day a Silver Cup will be run for near White Horse Hill, by any horse, &c., that never run for anything, carrying 11 stone, the best of 3 two-mile heats, to start at 10 o'clock.

Between the heats will be run for by poneys a Saddle Bridle and Whip; the best of 3 two-mile heats, the winner of 2 heats will be entitled to the saddle, the second best the Bridle, and the third the Whip.

The same time a Thill Harness will be run for by cart horses, &c., in their harness and bells, the carters to ride in smock frocks without saddles, crossing and jostling, but no whipping allowed.

A Flitch of Bacon to be run for by asses,

A good Hat to be run for by men in sacks, every man to bring his own sack.

A Waistcoat, 10s. 6d. value, to be given to the person who shall take a bullet out of a tub of flour with his mouth in the shortest time.

A cheese to be run for down the White Horse Manger.

Smocks to be run for by ladies, the second best of each prize to be entitled to a Silk Hat.

*Cudgel playing* for a *gold-laced Hat* and a pair of buckskin Breeches, and *Wrestling* for a pair of silver Buckles and a pair of Pumps,

The horses to be on the White Horse Hill by nine o'clock.

No less than four horses, &c., or asses to start for any of the above prizes."

Then came a Scouring on Whit Monday, May 15th, 1780, and of the doings on that occasion there is the following notice in the *Reading Mercury*, of May 22nd, 1780 :—"The ceremony of scowering and cleansing that noble monument of Saxon antiquity, the White Horse, was celebrated on Whit Monday, with great joyous festivity. Besides the customary diversions of horse racing, foot races, etc., many uncommon rural diversions and feats of activity were exhibited to a greater number of spectators than ever assembled on any former occasion. Upwards of thirty thousand persons were present, and amongst them most of the nobility and gentry of this and the neighbouring counties; and the whole was concluded without any material accident. The origin of this remarkable piece of antiquity is variously related; but most authors describe it as a monument to perpetuate some signal victory, gained near the spot, by some of our most ancient Saxon princes. The space occupied by this figure is more than an acre of ground."

There was also a list of the games, which was the same as that in 1776, excepting that in addition there was "a jingling-match by eleven blind-folded men, and one unmasked

and hung with bells, for a pair of buckskin breeches."

An old man, William Townsend by name, whose father, one Warman Townsend, had run down the manger after the fore-wheel of a waggon, and won the cheese at this scouring, told the story, as his father had told it to him, how that "eleven on 'em started, and amongst 'em a sweep chimley and a millurd; and the millurd tripped up the sweep chimley and made the soot flee a good 'un;" and how "the wheel ran pretty nigh down to the springs that time."

The next Scouring seems to have been held in 1785, concerning which one William Ayres of Uffington, aged about 84 years, in 1857 made the following statements:—"When I were a buoy about ten years old I remembers I went up White Hoss Hill wi' my vather to a pastime. Vather'd brewed a barrel o' beer to sell on the Hill—a deal better times than now—Augh! bless 'ee, a man medn't brew and sell his own beer now: and oftentimes he can't get nothin' fit to drink at thaay little beer-houses as is licensed, nor at some of the public-houses too for that matter. But 'twur not only for that as the times wur better then—But I be gandering shure

WHITE HORSE HILL.

enough,—well now, there wur Varmer Mifflin's mare run for and won a new cart-saddle and thill-tugs—the mare's name wur *Duke*. As many as a dozen or moor horses run, and they started from Idle's bush, which were a vine owld tharnin'-tree in thay days—a very nice bush. They started from Idle's bush, as I tell 'ee, and raced up to the Rudge-waay; and Varmer Mifflin's mare had it all one way, and beeat all the t'other on 'um holler. The pastime then wur a good 'un a wonderful sight o' folk of all sorts, rich and poor. John Morse of Uffington, a queerish sort of a man, grinned agin another chap droo' hos collars, but John got beeat—a fine bit o' spwoort to be shure, and meead the volks laaf. Another geeam wur to bowl a cheese down the Mainger, and the first as could catch 'un had 'un. The cheese was a tough 'un and held together, a did I assure 'ee, but thaay as tasted 'un said a warn't very capital arter all. Then were running for a peg too, and they as could ketch 'un and hang 'un up by the tayl had 'un. The girls, too run races for smocks—a deal of pastime to be sure. Then wur climmin' a grasy pole for a leg of mutton, too: and backsoordin', and wrastlin', and all that, ye knows. A man by the name of Blackford,

from the low countries, Zummersetshire, or that waay someweres, he won the prize, and wur counted the best hand for years arter, and no man couldn't break his yead; but at last, nigh on about twenty years arter, I'll warn 'twer—at Shrin'um Revel, Harry Stanley, the landlord o' the Blawin Stwun, broke his yead, and the low-country men seemed afeard o' Harry round about here for long arter that. Varmer Smallbwones, of Sparsholt, a mazin' stout man, and one as scarce no one, go where 'a would, could drow down, beeat all the low-country chaps at wrastlin', and none could stan' agean 'un. And so he got the neam o' Varmer Great-Bwones. 'Twur only when he got a drap o' beer a leetle too zoon, as he were drowed at wrastlin', but they never drowed 'un twice, and he had the best men come agean 'un for miles. This wur the first pastime as I well remembers, but there med ha' been some afore, for all as I knows. I ha' got a good memorandum, and minds things well when I wur a buoy, that I does. I ha' helped to dress the White Hoss myself, and a deal o' work 'tis to do 't, as should be, I can assure 'ee. About Claay Hill, 'twixt Fairford and Ziziter, I've many a time looked back at 'un, and a' looks as nat'ral as a pictur'."

Between 1785 and 1803 there were probably at least two Scourings about which no reliable information seems to have been obtained.

At the Scouring of 1803 Beckingham of Baydon won the prize at wrestling; Flowers and Ellis from Somersetshire won the prize at back-sword play; the waiter at the Bell Inn, Faringdon, won the cheese race and at jumping in sacks; and Thomas Street of Niton won the prize for grinning through horse-collars, but it was said "a man from Woodlands would ha' beeat, only he'd got no teeth. This geaam made the congregation laaf 'mazingly."

Then came a Scouring in 1808, at which the Hanney men came came down in a strong body and made sure of winning the prize for wrestling. But all the other gamesters leagued against them, and at last their champion, Belcher, was thrown by Fowler of Baydon. Two men, "with very shiny top-boots, quite gentlemen, from London," won the prize for back-sword play, one of which gentlemen was Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, said to be a Wiltshire man himself, who afterwards died at Waterloo. A new prize was given at this pastime, viz., a gallon of gin or half-a-guinea for the woman who would smoke most tobacco in an

hour. Only two gipsy-women entered, and it seems to have been a very blackguardly business, but it is the only instance of the sort on record.

There seems to be some doubt as to the date of the next Scouring, which was either in 1812 or 1813, but Judge Hughes thinks it was most probably in the latter year, because the clerk of Kingston Lisle, an old Peninsula man, told him that he was at home on leave in that year, and that there was to be a Scouring, and all the people were talking about it when he had to go back to the wars. At this Scouring there was a prize of a loaf, made out of a bushel of flour, for running up the Manger, which was won by Philip New, of Kingston-in-the-Hole, who cut the great loaf into pieces at the top, and sold the pieces for a penny a piece. The low-country men won the first backsword prize, and one Ford, of Ashbury, the second; and the Baydon men won the prize for wrestling. One Henry Giles had wrestled for the prize, but it is supposed took too much beer afterwards; at any rate he fell into the canal on his way home, and was drowned.

The next Scouring, about which any record is found, did not take place till 1825, and it seems to have been the largest gathering there has ever

been. The games were held at the Seven Barrows, which are distant two miles in a south-easterly direction from the White Horse, instead of in Uffington Castle, for some reason which does not appear. These seven barrows are popularly supposed to be the burial places of the principal men who were killed at Ashdown.

After this there was no Scouring till 1838, when, on the 19th and 20th of September, the old custom was revived under the patronage of Lord Craven. The *Reading Mercury* says that no more auspicious year could have been chosen for the revival "than that in which out youthful and beloved Queen first wore the British Crown, and in which an heir was born to the ancient and noble house of Craven, whom God preserve."

The next took place in September, 1843, about which it is recorded that the Berkshire and Wiltshire men, under Joe Giles, of Shrivenham, got the better of the Somersetshire men led by Simon Stone at backsword play; and then were two men who came down from London, who won the wrestling prize away from the countrymen. There seems to have been some difficulty in getting the elephant's caravan up the Hill, for Wombwell's menagerie came down for the

Scouring, and, though four-and-twenty horses were put to, it stuck fast four or five times. It does not seem to have struck the Berkshire folk that it would have been simpler to turn the elephant out and make him pull his own caravan up.

In September, 1857, was celebrated the festival so admirably described by Judge Hughes in his book, "The Scouring of the White Horse," to which we would refer our readers.

Of subsequent Scourings there is little or no record, village festivals having fallen gradually into disuse through the advent of railways and other means of communication with the outer world. The last took place in 1892, and was undertaken at the sole expense of Lady Craven, of Ashdown Park, the Horse having become so obliterated by neglect that its outline could scarcely be traced even at a few miles distance. It was unaccompanied by any festivities whatever.

## The Last of the Abbots.

THERE are few sadder stories than that of Hugh Farringdon, 31st mitred abbot of the great Abbey of Reading. One of the foremost ecclesiastics in the kingdom at the time of his terrible death, even in Henry VIII.'s reign of terror, few men fell so far, so suddenly, and so fatally.

An Abbot of Reading was a member of the House of Lords. He had a revenue with his abbey, amounting to well nigh £20,000 per annum at the present day; one of the most charming country residences conceivable at Pangbourne, Bere Place, which still retains some few relics of its abbot owners; and, in the abbey itself; an abode whose magnificence, even amidst those grand ruins, we very feebly realise. The abbey precincts were at least thirty acres, in the midst of which the great church arose in size and grandeur not far short of that of Canterbury Cathedral itself.

The earlier portion of his abbacy seems to have

been tranquil and happy. We read of no such grave disputes as in the case of Abbot Thorne. That 28th abbot seems to have carried fully out his name and crest. He was a thorn in many sides. We read of bitter complaints how he seized on the revenues of the Hospital for Poor Widows, and appropriated them to the uses of the Almoner of the abbey, and not content with this, laid hands also on St. Edmond's Chapel, which then stood at the end of Friar Street, which he made into a barn.

The 31st abbot was a very different man from the 28th. He had more of Mary than of Martha in him, as an old chronicler remarks somewhere of somebody else. There is reason to believe that he was a most amiable character. Mr. Kelly in his History of St. Lawrence has discovered the following interesting record of him amongst the receipts for pew rents :—

> "1520. Setis—Item of my lord abbot for his moder's sete iiij d."
>
> "A touching entry," says Mr. Kelly ; Hugh Faringdon, on his promotion to the abbey, though a man of humble extraction, did not forget to provide for the comfort of his poor aged mother."

It is true Leland speaks of him as an "illiterate monk." "Hugh Cook was a stubborn monk,

absolutely without learning." Of course he was a monk, that goes without saying. With regard to his "stubbornness," there may be two opinions. As for being "absolutely without learning," he appears to have been one of those admirable in every age, who have raised themselves from a low rank to a high one by sheer force of character. A poor boy may still become Lord Chancellor or Archbishop of Canterbury.

He appears not to have had educational advantages. He deplores this in a letter of much dignified modesty. He had occasion to correspond with the University of Oxford. The Oxford authorities seem to have been in need of some stone from a quarry of the abbey, and had addressed a polite request to him. He "returns thanks to the University for considering him in the number of those learned persons who had been members of that learned body," but speaks of himself as one who had not the least pretences to that character. He styles himself a man of no erudition; laments that the fates had denied him the advantages of instruction in his youth, and states that he is still anxious to become a member of the University, and apply himself to that course of study which would suit his

capacity, now become dull and feeble by length of years.

He was evidently a patron of learned men. Leonard Cox, Master of the Reading School, which, thanks to Henry VII., had been established in St. Lawrence's Hospice rescued from Abbot Thorne, dedicates his "Art of Rhetorick," 1539, to this last of the abbots.

He seems also to have been a good administrator, and an active magistrate, and we read of him as taking his place at the Bench at "Okingham," on 11th July, 1534, as one of the Justices of the Peace for the county. More than this he was a religious man. He took care that the Bible was read daily in the abbey. Dr. London, one of the commissionaries for dissolving the Monastery and Friary, reports to his superior, Lord Cromwell :—

> "They have a gudde lecture in scripture daily redde in the chapter house, both in Inglishe and Latin, to the which is gudde resort, and the abbot is at it himself."

When the commissioners arrived, he does not seem to have opposed them, or held back anything. Dr. London at first reports favourably :—

> "I have requested of my lord abbot the relics of his house, which he seledeted unto me with gudde will. 1

have taken an inventory of them, and have locked them up beside the high altar, and have the key in my keeping, and they be ready at your lordship's commandment."

Abbot Hugh made no resistance, and it might have been supposed the abbey would have escaped at least as well as the Friary; the Grayfriars having nothing to lose, were simply turned out into the street with a scanty pension, and their church given to the town for a town hall. How was it, then, that such a cruel fate overtook the principal monks here, for two others died with Hugh Farington on the same charge of high treason? Stowe says it was for denying the King's supremacy.

"The Act of Suppression passed in May, 1539, and in November following he was drawn, hanged, and quartered with two of his monks. The same day the Abbot of Glastonbury was executed, and shortly after the Abbot of Colchester."

It is here we get a clue, I think, to this extreme severity; these three leading Churchmen had all got involved in a treason plot. The Pilgrimage of Grace had very recently been suppressed. It had been assisted with money by various monasteries, and it would seem that these three great houses were specially compromised. Froude states this distinctly, speaking

in the first instance of the Abbot of Glastonbury (History of England, Vol. III., ch. 16, p. 240) :—

> "An order went out for enquiry into his conduct, which was to be executed by three of the visitors, Layton, Pollard, and Moyle. On 16 September (1539) they were at Reading, on the 22nd they had arrived at Glastonbury . . . the Abbot was placed in charge of a guard, and sent to London, to the Tower, to be examined by Cromwell himself, when it was discovered that both he and the Abbot of Reading had supplied the northern insurgent with moneys."

For this there could be no pardon. The insurrection had been too nearly successful. The principal leaders had suffered, and now their three supporters followed. Hugh Faringdon had not allowed the King's supremacy, but this might have been overlooked ; he had been very favourably reported by London to Cromwell. But now the law took its course, that horrible and terrible death assigned to high treason.

Froude describes the aged Abbot of Colchester drawn through the town that dismal November morning ; dragged to the top of Glastonbury Torre, there hanged, drawn, and quartered. It cannot be doubted that an equally ghastly scene was enacted at Reading. As accomplices in both instances, two monks were executed along with their principal.

The execution is supposed to have taken place here in front of the inner gateway, which still survives, and is a place of resort for the Berkshire Archæological Society. It may equally well have been at Gallows Common beyond Christ Church which was for long the ordinary place for executions. It would appear from St. Mary's registers that even in the eighteenth century twice in the year batches of prisoners were sent off there to the gallows: if so, the long and sad procession, as at Glastonbury, would traverse the whole length of the town. It was a most awful reverse of fortune. Both in 1532, and in 1535, we read of his receiving a gilt cup from the king as a New Year's present. He had even been on the commission for investigating how a manifesto from the leader of the insurrection in Yorkshire had got into circulation at Reading; but that fatal gift of money, which Cromwell had traced home to the Abbot of Glastonbury, and also to Abbot Hugh, was an act beyond pardon. He had been the king's favourite abbot, but was now convicted of high treason, and the sentence took its course.

> "He leaves a name which long time will avail
> To point a moral, and adorn a tale."

# Siege of Reading.

"Full soon the curse of Civil War
Came all our harmless sports to mar:
When law and order ceased to reign,
And knaves did eat up honest men;
When brother against brother stood
And all the land was drenched in blood."
—"*Donnington Castle.*"

"WHAT a glorious thing must be a victory Sir!" an enthusiastic young lady once exclaimed to the Iron Duke. "The greatest tragedy in the world," he replied, "Madam, except a defeat!" A siege is bad enough: an interesting thing to read and tell of, but, though it only lasted ten days, an event burned deep into the memories of Reading; replete with all but ruin to very many of her citizens; and entirely destroying for all time that town's once famous cloth-trade. As the tide of war ebbed and flowed along the Thames valley, now one side was uppermost, and now the other, and, in either case, it was "woe to the vanquished." One time there were the king's demands, then presently those of the Parliamentary party; fines followed levied unmercifully on recusants as

THE INNER GATEWAY, READING.

also loans wrung from, at length, unwilling supporters. A letter, still in the town archives, gives a vivid picture of the position of very many in those days in Berkshire and in Oxfordshire. It is a letter from G. Varney to the Town Clerk of Reading, not dated except from the prison into which the soldiers had cast him :—

> "Going," says Varney, "to market with a load of corn, the Earl of Manchester's soldiers met with my men, and took away my whole team of horses, letting my cart stand in the field four miles from home; and I never had them more. When the king's soldiers come to us they call me Roundheaded rogue, and say I pay rent to the Parliament garrison, and they will take it away from me; and likewise the Parliament soldiers, they vapour with me, and tell me that I pay rent to Worcester and Winchester, therefore the Parliament say they will have the rent."

Still more pathetic is the petition to Parliament that presently was made: "That, since the time the two armies came into the town, your petitioners have had their sufferings multiplied upon them; the soldiers going to that height of insolence that they break down our houses and burn them, take away our goods and sell them, rob our markets and spoil them, threaten our magistrates and beat them; so that, without a speedy redress, we shall be constrained, though to our utter undoing, yet for the preservation of our

lives, to forsake our goods and habitations, and leave the town to the will of the soldiers; who cry out they have no pay, have no beds, have no fire; and they must and will have it by force, or they will burn down all the houses in the town whatever become of them."

Such was the state of things which the mayor, with his twelve aldermen and twelve councillors of that day, had to grapple with: and a very difficult matter, as we shall see, he found it. Things were coming to a crisis here in 1643, in the April of which the ten-days' siege occurred; but they had long been leading up to this.

In 1636 the town was deeply stirred on the subject of ship-money; one party carried a resolution: "They who deny payment of ship-money to be proceeded against as the council of the corporation shall direct;" a little later another party seems to have got the uppermost, and the entry is 1641: "Agreed that those persons within the town which were distressed for ship-money shall have their moneys repaid them."

At first the Parliamentary Party were in the ascendency; then 1642 came. Edgehill was fought 23rd October, then the king took Banbury, and then marched upon Reading. Henry

Martin, M.P., afterwards the regicide, had been appointed by the Parliament governor of Reading; but, upon the royal advance, at once withdrew with his small garrison and fled to London. The king arrived here on November 4th, from which time matters certainly became sufficiently exciting.

"The game of Civil War will not allow
Bays to the victor's brow.
At such a game what fool would venture in,
Where one must lose, yet neither side can win?"

—*Cowley.*

Yet every day saw the game played more and more in earnest. Charles reached Reading, 4th November, 1642, having sent on the previous day: "Whereas I have received information that the bridge on the river Thames at Causham was lately broke down, our Will and express Command is that ye immediately upon sight hereof cause the said bridge to be rebuilt, and made strong and fit for the passage of our army by time 8 of the clock in the morning as the bearer shall direct; of this you may not fail at your utmost peril."

The mayor at this time was a firm royalist. One of the Diurnals of the other side thus records his endeavours: "At the king's coming

to Reddinge a speech was made unto him by the mayor of the town, wherein after he had in the best words he could devise bid him welcome thither, for want of more matter he concluded very abruptly." This is malicious enough, but nothing to the story that follows: "Not long after he invited Prince Robert *(sic)* to dine, providing for him all the dainties that he could get, but especially a woodcock, which he brought in himself. Prince Robert gave him many thanks for his good cheer, and asked him whose was all that plate that stood upon the cupboard? The mayor, who had set out all his plate to make a show, and besides had borrowed a great deal of his neighbours to grace himself withal, replied, 'And please your Highness the plate is mine!' 'No!' quoth the prince, 'this plate is mine,' and so accordingly he took it all away; bidding him be of good cheer, for he took it, as the Parliament took it, upon the public faith."

Lord Saye and Sele, just before, however, had carried off two large baskets, full of the Christ Church plate, at Oxford, for parliamentry purposes.

Now almost every day has its event, and dates must be regarded.

November 8th.—The town is startled by a

peremptory order to impress all the tailors in Reading, and within six miles round, to make clothes for the garrison, with which they are to be honoured; Sir Arthur Ashton is appointed governor, with a salary from the town of £7 per week; he is soon able to lend the poor corporation £100. At once he begins to fortify; all are forced to assist; those who do not come to work being fined 7d. per day; forts and chains are placed at the end of every street, and the Oracle, or cloth factory at once is utilized as a barrack.

It is an interesting fact, that through the pious care of a wealthy citizen, Reading still possesses the old gates of the Oracle. There they are in honourable retirement at the top of St. Mary's Hill; the Kenrich crest in one place, the initials, J. K., of the founder of this factory for poor clothiers, in another; the date 1526 still in another part; all being in very fair state of preservation. How few of the busy many that pass those gates every day think of the scenes that these have witnessed, and could tell of, if walls had voices as well as ears!

"When Puritan and Cavelier
With shout and psalm contended!
And Rupert's oath, and Cromwell's prayer,
With sound of battle blended!"—*Whittier.*

And now the corporation wait upon King Charles and assure him they will "assist him with counsel, and their purses, to the best of their ability." He probably preferred the latter, for—

November 9th.—We have notice of a consulttation had "about the execution of the king's warrants," and on

November 17th.—"A tax is levied to pay those great charges which are now layed upon the borough concerning cloth, apparell, victualls, and other things for his Majestie's army." Then on

November 28th.—The king goes off to Oxford, and henceforth they are left to Sir Arthur's tender mercies: about this time we find a pathetic entry: "A noate of all such charges as have been disembursed, since the King's Majestie came first to Reading, for provisions, clothes for the soldiers, and for the king's own use;" being £6697, truly a prodigious sum for those times; but it is speedily followed by fresh requisitions. As the year opens it appears probable that Reading will be attacked, and so on 3rd March, 1543, a letter arrives from the king, ordering Sir Arthur to provision Reading for three months, to provision Greenlands a fortified

country house just below Henley, to send out scouting parties to watch the enemy, and to prevent carriage of supplies to London. This rouses the Parliament. Essex is ordered to march on Oxford, taking Reading in his way; but the governor now is all ready for him. Mapledurham House and Cawsham have now been made into fortified out-posts, and, on the arrival of Essex's "trumpet," Colonel Codrington in his diary tells us the governor returned the stubborn answer that "he would either keep the town or die inside it!" There can be no doubt he would have made a resolute resistance; he was a brave and capable soldier, but, being wounded in the head by a tile dislodged by a cannon ball, on the third day of the siege, his place was taken by a Colonel R. Fielding, as next in seniority. The sad history of the gallant soldier is worth following further. At the capitulation he went to Oxford; there he managed to lose a leg, and presently turns up in Ireland, unluckily for him, at Drogheda. Cromwell storms, determined, after the inhuman massacres of Protestants, on making a harsh example of the Irish garrison, and Sir Arthur, now in command there, strange to say, has his brains knocked out

with his own wooden leg, which the soldiers imagined was filled with gold pieces—they did find two hundred about his person—the very thing which Hood imagined long after of his unhappy heroine.

"Gold, still gold! hard, yellow, and cold,
For gold she had lived, and she died for gold,
For a golden weapon had killed her!
And the jury, its forman a gilder,
They brought it in a Felo di Se
Because her own leg had killed her!

Price of many a crime untold,
Good or bad, a thousand fold,
How widely gold's agencies vary!
To save, to curse, to ruin, to bless,
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamped with the image of Good Queen Bess,
And now of a bloody Mary!"

There is a portrait of Sir A. Aston at the Reading Public Library, a middle aged man with a large square chin and most determined expression. Sir Jacob Astley, after governor here, and made Baron Reading, is also in the Library, a pleasant looking old gentleman.

The town was very strongly and securely fortified, I quote from the diary of Sir Samuel Luke, Scout Master for the parliament after the surrender, when he had just been over

it: "They had only three ways out of the town, where they had built three sconces, one at Forbury, one at Harrison's Barn, and another at the end of Pangbourn lane; the Forts were very well wrought, and strong both with trenches and pallisades; the town entrenched round so that if any man of the Parliamentary side should have delivered up a place as this town, he would have deserved a halter."

"It would appear," writes Mr. Childs, "that earth works were thrown up in a rude square, extending from Grey Friars Church and the present prison on the north, to midway in Kendrick Road, and to Katesgrove Hill on the south; and from about the line of Kendrick Road on the east to Castle Hill on the west. Redoubts were thrown up at intervals, and on the top of Whitley Hill a strong fort known as 'Harrison's Barn.'"

This Sir Samuel appears to have been a stout and able soldier, but, unfortunately for him, he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of Butler, who has pilloried him as the well-known Hudibras. Dr. Johnson says, writing of Butler, "The necessitudes of his condition placed him in the family of Sir S. Luke, one of Cromwell's

officers, and a Presbyterian magistrate. Here he observed much of the character of the sectaries." Certainly he did, and recorded much; and though very much is gross caricature, still it is thus that Sir Samuel must be content to come down to us.

"When civil dudgeon first grew high,
And men fell out they knew not why:
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a colonelling.
He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic;
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west tide:
On either side he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute.
For his religion it was fit
To match his learning and his wit.
'Twas Presbyterian true blue,
For he was of the stubborn crew
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun:
And prove their doctrine or the dox
By apostolic blows and knocks.
Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipped God for spite.
Quarrel with mince-pies, and disparage
Their best and dearest friend plum-porridge.
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the nose."

On Sir Arthur's refusal to surrender, the town

was at once assailed, the Royalist out-posts at Caversham being easily driven in, the bridge broken down, and batteries planted there commanding the town. This was April 15th. The Earl of Essex had at this time some 16,000 foot, and 300 horse, a force which in the course of a week was nearly doubled. His headquarters were at Southcote, leaving Colonel Skippon in charge of the siege works in the meadows at the N. W. of the town, on the old Battel Abbey estate, where was most of the fighting; whilst Lord Gray of Warwick sat down before the town, on the S. E. parts, with 7,000 horse and foot. Codrington tells us the Earl held a council of war, at which it was debated whether to storm or not. The cavalry were for attempting it, the infantry against, and this latter opinion prevailed, the garrison being supposed to be stronger than it really was. We read in the "Perfect Diurnal" of February 10th, "They are 4,000 strong in the town; some works are cast up as high as the houses; they have made use of all the clothier's wool in the town, and made wool-packs thereof." "There is nothing like leather," as is well known; but it may be doubted whether bales of cloth are benefited by a

week's cannonading. No wonder the cloth-trade languished after that involuntary employment of the stock-in-trade.

And now we will come to dates, making use of our two friends' diaries. It is a pity we have not also a Royalist record to check them by. But first we will take a look at the army investing. They are most of them young troops, and with officers at present unversed in siege operations: but some have already fought at Edgehill, notably the Saye and Sele "Blue Coats;" Colonel Nathanael and Colonel John Fiennes commanding them, would both be there, and perhaps his lordship. Hampden's "Green Coats" would also add to the variety, with the London train bands "Red Coats;" this red was a colour that Cromwell afterwards adopted for the whole of the British army, and which, it need hardly be remarked, is now "the thin red line which never wavers," and which more than once has confronted both cavalry and artillery successfully.

April 17th. Writes Sir Samuel:—"Our lines got within musket shot of the town."

April 18th.—"The enemy appeared on Cawsham hills under General Ruven, went to Sonning, and put down (up?) the river in boats 600

musketeers, with several waggon loads of ammunition; which we could not hinder because we had broken down Cawsham bridge."

This was very cleverly managed, as the town had at first only twenty barrels of gunpowder altogether. Now their artillery would be well supplied; and the barges ran up by the Kennet in perfect safety into the very heart of the town. Immediately after this a battery was planted on the Thames bank by Essex, that effectually 'shut the door' north of the Kennet; but, by this time, 'the horse was stolen,' or, at least, the powder safe housed! On this day a cannon burst, killing four men and wounding half-a-dozen more of the besiegers; but what was much more serious for the King's party on this day, the Governor got a hurt that at once totally incapacitated him, and a mere seniority officer, a Col. Richard Fielding, took the command.

On the 19th there was a brisk sally, but repulses of the garrison. "On that night His Excellency advanced his batteries and placed his ordinance within less than pistol shot of Harrison's Fort." Stout old Skippon is here: and is in deadly earnest, like Cromwell, however unwilling Essex and Manchester may be to go to extremities.

April 20th. Says our Chronicler:—"Lord Gray pushes closer up.

April 21st is an eventful day. "Battered the town," says the diary, "got up within pistol shot of one of their choicest bulwarks in a place called the Gallow's Field." On this day it is that St. Giles steeple comes to grief; now we will copy Codrington. "They planted ordinance on a steeple, but our cannons were levelled against it with such dexterity, that both cannoniers and cannon were soon buried under the ruins."

April 22nd.—"Flower, sent by the King to say he was coming to raise the siege, swam in with despatches, but is caught going back, and so the plan frustrated." Essex reversed his batteries, and so was ready to give the approaching Royalists a hot reception.

April 23rd.—An unlucky spy is seized, who had volunteered the perilous work of blowing up the siege ammunition train; he is hung in sight of the rampart, which is retaliated on the next day.

April 24th.—"A sudden sally; they got into our trenches, and killed four men; but were driven back with loss of twelve, but we could not get out the bodies of our men. Lord Gray got within pistol shot of Harrison's Barn."

This seems to have frightened Col. Fielding, who evidently was not the stuff that heroes are made of.

Hark! Hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along the charging lines:
'For Love!' 'For the Cause!' 'For the Church!' 'For the Law'!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

25th April, 9 a.m.—The town hung out a white flag, and sent "a drum to beat a parley, which His Excellency gave way to." If Fielding had but held out another day, and had co-operated with the King's forces, the town might have been relieved, and Essex driven away; for a few hours after, Charles makes a determined attack in force upon Caversham Bridge, which is only repulsed after heavy fighting, and through Essex being able to give his undivided attention. "The fight began," says Codrington, "about Cawsham Bridge, and on both sides great valour and resolution was expressed. After less than half-an-hour's fight, the enemy began to give ground, leaving about 300 arms, and many of their men behind them; their Horse also, which came down the hill to assist the Fort, were gallantly repulsed; about a hundred were slain upon the spot, among whom Sergt. Major Smith, in whose pocket was found good store of gold."

This settled the matter. Charles retired unmolested to Caversham House, where Fielding was allowed to go to him on April 26th. He obtained leave to surrender, the picked troops of the garrison being urgently required for service elsewhere. This permission, of course, did not clear Fielding, who was tried afterwards by court martial and sentenced to be beheaded, but the King did not allow the sentence to be carried out.

April 27th.—The surrender takes place. "He was pardoned," says Clarendon, "without much grace; his regiment was given to another, and he resolved as a volunteer; in this capacity he fought desperately through the war when danger was most rife, but in vain. So difficult a thing it is to play an after game of reputation in that nice and jealous profession of arms." "As they march out at Friar's Corner," says Sir Samuel, "at the same place when, as is recorded further, the soldiers plundered the houses of four Grand Malignants who had given information to the Governor of such persons as were inclined to the cause of the Parliament, and had therefore paid a double tax to the weekly contribution." This, perhaps, was as little as could be expected from a victorious cause; and Sir

Samuel again concludes all very characteristically and satisfactorily too, as regards the God-fearing soldiers of the Commonwealth.

April 30th, "being the Sunday, was spent in preaching and hearing God's word, the churches being extraordinarily filled, and soldiers and all men carrying themselves very civilly all the day long."

Sickness appears to have broken out amongst Essex's young soldiers encamped on the marshy meadows on the N.W. of the town, which may have had something to do with the easy terms granted. The Mercurius Aulicus, the Court Journal, has a story that "a soldier said that Essex caused five great pits to be dug at a distance from his camp, into which he cast the slain to conceal their number." The Earl stayed here until July, and ordered a heavy contribution for the pay of the soldiers. The Corporation, however, waited upon him to represent "they had been so impoverished by the late siege, and the exactions of His Majesty, as to be utterly unable to raise any more money amongst them." And this excuse seems to have been graciously accepted. Charles' "little finger," in money matters, was of necessity "thicker than the Parliament's loins," and this lead considerably

to the declining of his cause. When the tide of war turned a couple of years after, he appeared again here, and stayed at Coley; but we do not hear then of any more forced benevolences; indeed he conferred a real benefit, by having the fortification "slighted," which no doubt the burgesses received with extreme satisfaction. So the siege ended. Sieges in those days were trying to reputations. Colonel N. Fiennes, at Bristol, and then Prince Rupert at the same place, whether justly or not, were heavily censured for surrendering, and both of them came very near to sharing the fate of Fielding. That old lamentation was speedily verified; but with this we have happily no further connection.

"Lament! Lament!
And let thy tears run down,
To see the rent
Between the robe and crown!
War, like a serpent, has its head got in,
And will not cease so soon as 't did begin."

## Reading Abbey.

IT is hardly necessary to state that in rather early days, when the Thames flowed into the Rhine and Great Britain was a part of a greater continent, there was no Reading Abbey. Neither was there sometime after, when the city was a swamp between the Thames and the Kennet, and some few huts clustered round the Roman station Ad Pontes, where the legions crossed from Londinium on their way to the rich and important town of Calleva. We may possibly date our abbey's beginning from the third or fourth century. It may have been a chapel of ease to that interesting little church lately uncovered, and alas! covered up again, at Silchester. At any rate we are on firm ground when, towards the end of the tenth century, we locate a nunnery here, founded by Queen Elfreda, who at last began to repent of her various crimes. She had, perhaps, some excuse for arranging with the King to get rid of her first husband, who had deceived his royal master, lead astray by her fatal beauty.

Thus she attained the throne to which she had no doubt been destined; but it was going too far to retain it by the murder of the son of her predecessor, Queen Ethelfleda; which is one of the horrid memories that clings round Corfe Castle. And now we leap to the beginning of the twelfth century and get on still firmer ground, when Henry I., at the height of his power, and also beginning to feel a little compunction, resolved to make reparations by founding what should be an abbey of world-wide magnificence.

He certainly succeeded. I mean with his abbey, though I am not prepared to go as far as do the chroniclers of his predecessor :—

> "King Ethelbert lies here,
> Closed in this polyander.
> For building churches straight he goes
> To heaven without meander.

Henry I. never did things by halves, and they could build in those days. His architect had *carte blanche*, and with wonderful speed there arose that glorious fabric whose ruins we weep over, and use for our flower shows. The abbey covered some thirty acres. It was surrounded with a wall, vast and strong, except where guarded by the Kennet, and four huge embattled gate-

ways opened out to the four quarters. Almost all its stones are now gone. "It pitieth," or it ought to pity the by-passers to see some in the wall of that house in Hosier Street, some very few on the site, and oh, 18th century! many cart-loads vandalised into a bridge on the road to Henley, near where the Druid's temple of despoiled Jersey adds another sorrow to the scenery. But at its dedication in 1164, in Henry II.'s time, the abbey and the abbey church must indeed have been magnificent. The latter was a cruciform building 420 × 92 feet in dimensions, without an aisle, covering the vast space between the Forbury and the gaol. Its extent is well shown, by the notices the Corporation has lately put up under the skilled guidance of those two chiefest of experts, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Berkshire Archæological Society. After the dedication ceremony, the King, and his still friendly Beckett, would doubtless adjourn to the magnificent Consistory, the great Hall, one of the largest and finest in England, destined to see so many Parliaments, and other national assemblings.

The inner gateway still remains, restored, perhaps, almost too modernly; close inspection

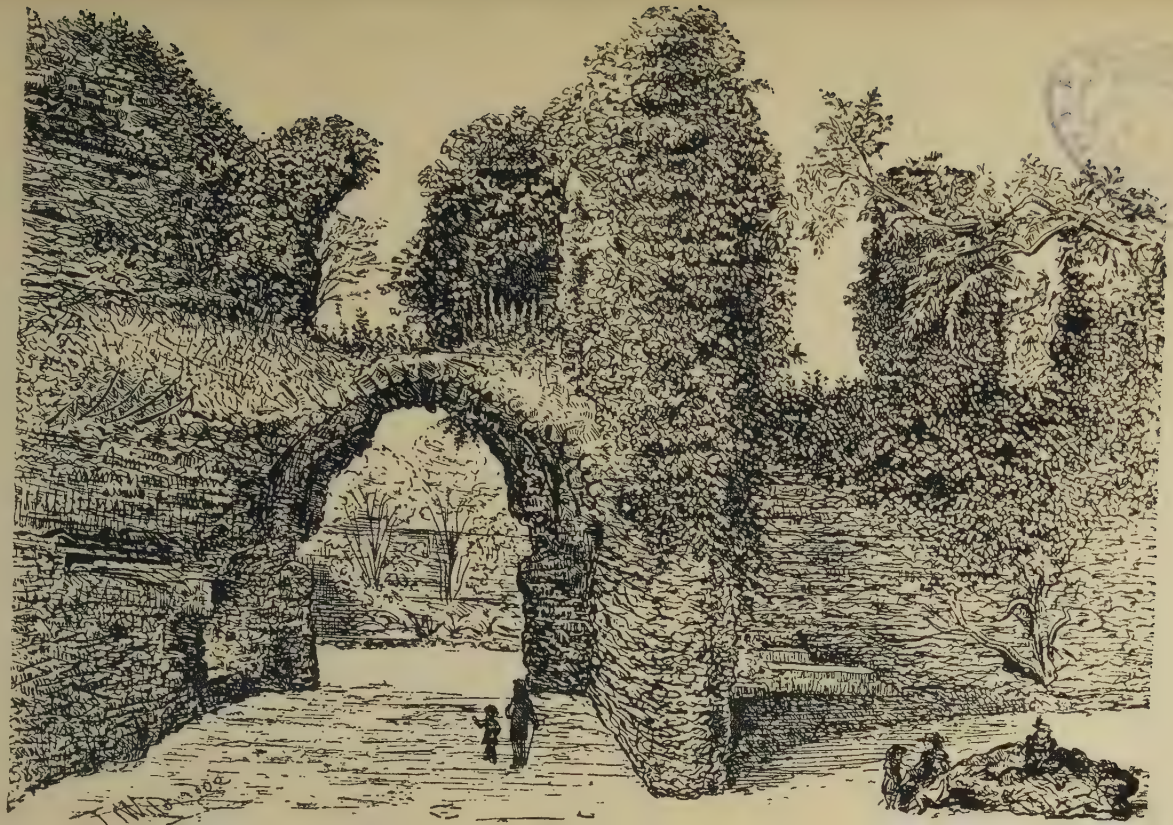
will, however, show the old gate hinges and portcullis way; closer investigation still may even discover the dog badge of the last abbot, and a dolphin with the red rose of Lancaster on its tail, probably also belonging to the same period. Here the humble burgesses used to bow themselves before the Lord Abbot, and listen whilst he was pleased to indicate which of them might fulfil the then limited office of mayor. In front of this, as some say, the last abbot and his two accomplice monks died the awfully cruel traitor's death, having been convicted of sending supplies to the northern rebels in their so-called Pilgrimage of Grace. It has much pleasanter modern memories, being lent by the good town to the Berkshire Archæological Society, and being the scene in its fine old chamber of many interesting archæological gatherings. But I have strayed a long way from 1164. The second Henry's reign was no doubt its golden period; more memories cluster about the abbey in the twelfth century than at any other time. Here, the year before, in 1163, had occurred "the Fight on the Island," when, much to Henry's regret, de Bohun fell beneath the spear of de Montford.

"His fame, as blighted in the field,
He strove to clear by spear and shield;
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above.
How could the guiltless champion quail,
Or how the great ordeal fail!"

"The knights met on horseback," says Norroy Seagur, "clad in armour, (on the island just below Caversham Bridge; a street running down to it has lately been called De Montford Street), Montford attacked with such resolution as to hurl Henry of Essex out of the saddle, when being stunned and faint from loss of blood, he was taken up apparently dead." King Henry handed him over to the monks of Reading Abbey, under whose care he recovered, and at once joined the fraternity. Some years after, and following on that bad Beckett business, Henry was here again, for here, in 1185, came Heraclius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Master of the Temple with him, appealing for a crusade to all Christian Kings, and especially to King Henry, who, it was considered, especially needed that moral white-washing. What a sight for the abbey! They brought with them the Standard of the Kingdom of the Holy Land, the Keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the Tower

of David. The King reverently received them all, but handed them back to the Patriarch until he could consult with his barons. Henry was too old to go, but numbers of the young nobility took the cross, and carried it in the van against the Infidel; and not least fiery Prince Richard, the king of all knight errants. He went off immediately on coming to the throne, and performed exploits which far exceed those imagined by Ariosto. Unfortunately he needed money, and had to carry off the golden cover his father gave for the chief abbey relic, the hand of St. James; but that doubtless would soon be replaced by the offerings of the home-staying faithful.

Also in this reign, and at its close, were several royal funerals. Henry I. of course had himself buried here, as it was said in a silver coffin, which caused some very ruthless explorations at the time of the Suppression. A stone coffin found here recently had a very distinguished origin suggested for it by a high local authority. In 1154, Prince William, eldest son of Henry II., was buried here near his grandfather. Also here was buried King Henry II.'s second wife, Adeliza; and thereby hangs a very complicated and curious tale.



In 1810 some workmen digging in the abbey precincts "found a box which contained a perfectly formed fleshy hand (writes Mrs. Climenson, in her almost universal 'History of Shiplake,') holding a slender rod surmounted by a crucifix." This, she says, is now in Mr. Scott Murray's Roman Catholic Chapel at Danesfield, and is considered to be the hand of St. James the Less, which was brought from Germany by the Empress Maud, and given by her to her father, who gave it to the Abbey. "It is in perfect preservation, a plump and well-shaped hand, small, and with taper fingers, and almond-shaped nails, so small it might well be a woman's." And it probably is, and the hand of Queen Adeliza. One almost regrets it was not left in its hoped-for last resting-place. There is something gruesome in such remains, especially, perhaps, in heaped-up skulls in museums. Those lines of a modern poet on such a sight are pathetic.

"Did she live centuries, or ages back?
What colour were those eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair, or brown, or black?
Poor little head! that long has done with aching!"

In Stephen's days, in the interval between the

Henries, the poor monks seem to have had rather an uncomfortable time of it. Stephen patronized them; he would have money, but he took it politely. When for a while his cause went down, and the Empress Queen arrived here, she was quite as exacting, and also bullied them most unmercifully. They must have been devoutly thankful when she at last went off to her continental possession; and when she came back for sepulchre would no doubt be able to receive her with greater equanamity. An English dean not long ago was accused of having "refused to bury a Dissenter." "On the contrary," he replied, "I shall feel the greatest pleasure in burying you all!"

Now we pass to the fourteenth century. Here, in 1359, Edward III. celebrated the marriage of his son John of Gaunt with Blanche, daughter of Henry Plantagenet. This was unquestionably the grandest wedding that ever happened, or could happen at Reading. The King of France, just lately taken prisoner at Poictiers, was part of the bridal party; so also a very famous Englishman, who came over here from his residence at Donnington Castle. Chaucer describes the whole thing at much length:—

"And the feste holden was in tentes,
As to tell you my intent is:
In a rome, a large plaine,
Under a wode, in a champagne;
Beside a river and a welle
Where never had abbeye ne selle;
Ben, ne kerke, hous, ne village,
In time of any man's age,
And dured three Months the feast,
In one estate, and never ceased.
From early of the rising of the sun,
Till the day spent was, and y-ronne;
In justing, dancing, and lustiness,
And all that served to gentilesse."

—*The Dream.*

From Edward III. we will pass, though not in immediate succession to Edward IV.'s time; and I am again indebted to Mrs. Climenson for calling attention to a picture in the British Museum of Reading Abbey about 1470, where "the widow Gray"—as the Lancastrians called her—where Edward IV.'s bride, Queen Elizabeth, is represented as standing under this very inner gateway, already mentioned, so dear to the heart of every citizen of Reading. The abbot is there to meet her on her disembarkation, with all fitting reverence. In the distance are the royal barges, at the abbot's landing, on the Kennet.

After this almost a century glides by unevent-

fully. Like the Vicar of Wakefield, though not accompanied as he was, the abbot's adventures do not seem to have got much beyond "changing from the blue room to the green," at least from the abbey to Bere Court and back again. There were squabbles with the rising town; the aldermen began to be what would be now called "uppish," but the abbot was practically omnipotent, and sometimes, as in Abbot Thorne's time, had a heavy hand which effectually kept town councillors in their proper places. We can hardly realise now what very great men those mitred abbots must have been—practically-popes in their own districts where they wielded both the temporal and spiritual sword pretty vigorously.

The Abbot of Reading had precedence over all except Glastenbury and St. Albans. He had vast revenues at his disposal, worth nearly £20,000, it is reckoned, of our money,—a handsome income even after allowing for the lavish hospitality and almsgiving expected and rendered. He had the power of making knights, which the local name "Whiteknights," and the hospice there, shows to have been pretty freely exercised; though the fact that every priest was at one time "Dominus," or "Sir so and so,"

occasions a little ambiguousness as to knights in these earlier centuries.

In Reading itself, as already remarked, the abbot, within the law, was almost absolute over the lives and properties of the township growing up under the abbey shadow; his household, and all about him, was modelled on a scale of more than princely magnificence, and it is to be doubted whether any, except the very highest nobility, could show anything like such an extravagent retinue.

The very list is exhausting: marshal, master of the horse, two keepers of the pantry, three cupbearers, four janitors, five pages, eight chamberlains, twelve hostellers (whose duty was to receive strangers), twenty huntsmen, thirty-one running footmen, and last, not least, an almoner. What wonder that such magnificence contrasted but badly by the side of the self-denying Grey Friars, and that the great Benedictine abbey broke down at last under its own greatness! Its last abbot was not the worst, nor the least deserving by any means, only he fell on evil days; and, when he stood by his own order, had little idea of the terrible significance of treason in the eyes of a Tudor.

At first Abbot Hugh was favourably reported on by the commissioners. "On Sep. 16, 1539," quotes Froude, "they were at Reading; on the 22nd at Glastenbury; but the abbot there, his answer appeared cankered and traitorous; he was sent to the Tower to be examined by Cromwell himself, when it was discovered that both he and the Abbot of Reading had supplied the northern insurgents with money."

Reading Abbey perished; on the other hand, the Grey Friars Monastery was simply dissolved, its monks frugally pensioned, and turned out into the street; their noble church was made into a guildhall, but preserved by that at any rate, and is now restored, and is the town's noblest relic of antiquity. Of the great Benedictine abbey, on the other hand, only the almost imperishable flint core survives of its mighty buildings. It may have plundered Silchester; it was itself for long a very stone pit for the builder. Its "record" is that of Rome, "Quod non fecerunt Barbari fecerunt Barberini"—the Roman princes made a stone quarry of the Colosseum. That bridge at Park Place is an almost equal barbarism,

but before this, boat loads of abbey stones had gone down the river to help to build the Hospital of the Poor Knights of Windsor.

The roof of the great Consistory went to St. Mary's Church, in Reading, thus happily preserved, and where all may still see it. The panelling went to Merton College, Oxford. In fact by the time of James the plundering was complete; only land cannot run away, and so he conferred that upon Prince Henry, the then heir apparent of the kingdom.

Since then its history has been uneventful; granted at first to the Knollys family, it became at times a royal residence; the royal stables were extensive, and horses stood were monks had knelt. This seems to be alluded to, in that singular old poem, "Cantio Cygni," when Thamesis is spoken of as arriving at Reading.

"From hence he little Chansey Seeth, and hasteneth to see
Fair Reddingetown, a place of name, where clothy-woven bee,
This shows our Alfred's victories, what time Begsal was slain
With other Danes, who carcases lay trampled on the plain.
And here these fields y-drenched were with blood upon them shed,
Where on the prince, in stable now, hath standing many a steede.

King James, as has been stated, gave the abbey to his eldest son, and it passed, in due time, into the excellently guardian hands of the Reading Corporation. Musing amid the ruins of this ancient pile, we may call to mind the lives of the men who once lived and worked and prayed on this spot, of the kings and great men who thronged the minster church and held parliaments in the precincts, and all the mighty events in history which took place in this, the chiefest and grandest monastic house in England. The memory of the glories of Reading Abbey will not soon pass away.

# The First Battle of Newbury, 1643.

By Edward Lamplough.

THE armed phase of the great rebellion was in its second year, and neither party had achieved any great advantage. If the Royalists had thought to carry all before them in a summer campaign, they had found out their mistake; and it must have been equally evident to the Parliamentarians that they had embarked upon a struggle the end of which might prove bloody and disastrous to their cause.

Charles resolved upon the capture of Gloucester. On the 10th of August, 1643, he sounded trumpets before the gates, and called upon the commandant to surrender. Colonel Massey, a soldier of fortune, was faithful to his trust, and the royal trumpeter returned to the King's camp accompanied by two deputies of "lean, pale, sharp, and dismal visages," the bearers of a written declaration that, by God's help, Gloucester should be maintained, under the King's command, *as signified by both Houses of*

*Parliament.* To this defiance was attached the signatures of Governor Massey, the Mayor, thirteen aldermen, and many wealthy burghers. Enraged rather than discouraged, Charles broke ground before the walls, amid the smoking suburbs, which had been fired by the stubborn Parliamentarians, whose wives and daughters went forth to cut turfs for the renewal of the earthern ramparts, shot away by the fire of the besiegers. With attack and sally, and storm of cannon and musket bullets, the siege held for a time, then resolved into a blockade, and Charles was on the eve of winning by famine where steel and lead had failed, when the Earl of Essex bestirred himself, and came to the rescue with the trained bands of London and a body of horse. He arrived not a moment too soon, for the besieged were reduced to their last barrel of powder.

The caution of Essex might well have stimulated the besiegers to give him battle before the walls of Gloucester; he was, however, permitted to enter unopposed, and to secure the city by liberal supplies of provisions and ammunition, and by the reinforcement of the garrison. The object achieved, the return march was com-

menced, in the course of which Essex paid a surprise visit to Cirencester, cutting off two regiments of Royal horse, and seizing a considerable quantity of provisions which had been collected during the siege of Gloucester.

The opportunity of striking a very serious blow at the enemy now offered itself to the King, and he resolved to act. Essex's forces consisted principally of the City trained bands, held in little repute by his army, and supported by a small body of cavalry, inferior to the bold riders of Rupert in number and conduct. Essex cut off and destroyed, Charles might strike the capital, and stifle the rebellion in the nest that bred it.

So Rupert poured forth his gay cavaliers, with gleam of cuirass and rapier, to intercept Essex, and hold him at bay until Charles came up to strike; for, as usual, the Royalists knew nothing of Essex's movement until twenty-four hours after he had left Gloucester. First blood was shed at Hungerford, when Prince Rupert, seconded by the Queen's life-guards, struck Essex's rear, and found tough work with Stapylton's brigade. But night closing in, rapier and broadsword were sheathed. Here the

Marquis de Vieuville, a gallant Frenchman, fell, mortally wounded, into the hands of the Parliamentarians.

The next day the two armies converged upon Newbury, but Charles won the race by two hours, and Essex lay in the open fields, alert and anxious, for a conflict on the morrow was inevitable.

Assisted by General Lord Ruthven, Charles made his disposition for the battle, holding Essex at bay, with all the advantages of a defensive position and a superior cavalry. His army held Speen Hill, with its right wing resting upon the Kennet; the left protected by a battery, and lying towards Shaw Fields. The rear was sufficiently defended by the river Lambourne and the artillery of Donnington Castle. Thus the Parliamentarians were barred from the London road by the cavaliers.

Although Charles had taken up a defensive position, sunrise of the following morning, September, 20th, 1643, set the skirmishers free, and shots rang along the front from hedge and cover, as the soldiers felt their way towards the closer, sterner business of the day. Essex's first aim was to take up a position on Speen Hill.

He lead the attacking force, which consisted of his own regiment, Barclay and Balfour's horse, Stapylton's brigade, and Lord Roberts' regiment of foot. His lordship had cast aside buff and corslet, and fought in his white holland shirt. Essex, a notable swordsman, found brisk work with the cavaliers on Speen Hill, but he won and held his position, although the young Earl of Carnarvon held him long in deadly play, charging straight through his rank. Pierced, but not routed, the troops were reformed, and obstinately maintained the struggle. It proved fatal to the gallant Carnarvon, who, according to Lord Clarendon, was run through the body by a passing trooper. Sir Roger Manley, however, states that the Earl was laid low by a shot, which struck him in the head, while leading the pursuit. Essex, although successful in this movement, was separated from the infantry, who fought the real battle, and, by their stubborn valour, held the Royal army at bay.

Had Charles maintained a purely defensive position, Essex would have been compelled to force the fighting. His inferiority in cavalry would have told heavily against him, and his infantry would probably have failed to force a

passage through the Royal army. The ardour of the skirmishers in the first hours of the day probably drew him into the battle, which soon became general.

The London trained bands, under Skippon, received their baptism of blood in Newbury marsh and meadows, where they were drawn up, with the cavalry on the flanks. Rupert was seconded that day by some of the boldest and fiercest cavalrymen in the Royal armies; and he poured them again and again, a raging flood of foaming horse and men, upon the Parliamentarians. Pressing up to the very edge of flashing pike-points, with desperate stroke and thrust, and discharge of pistols, the gallant cavaliers strove to reach the sturdy Londoners; only to fall back from the fierce pike-thrust, while the snorting war-chargers reared and swerved from the iron front, and the grim musketeers poured in their heavy fire from the rear, emptying many a saddle, and sorely thinning the ranks of the King's bold riders.

Fighting under the King's eye, the cavaliers did all that could be expected from the most devoted loyalty; but Skippon's pikemen were beating back the repeated surges for their very

life's sake; for the honour and safety of London, and for Essex's preservation. Once let that tide break in, and Rupert's revenge would be terrible. Three times, in quick succession, the London Blues were charged by two regiments of Royal horse, bent at all hazards to break in, but the musketeers plied their shot so thick and fast, and made such great havoc in the charging ranks, that the cavaliers drew off, after their third charge, and made no further attempt.

Triumphant as the Parliamentarians were in beating back the spirited charges of Rupert's gallant cavalry, the toil and strain of battle fell heavily upon them, and stung into sudden action by the galling fire of the Royal batteries, they made a somewhat disordered dash towards Donnington, with the intention of spiking the cannon, the Red London trained bands leading. Rupert saw the movement, and was quick to seize the only opportunity of victory that presented itself. In an instant he was upon them with "Byron's Blacks" and Colepepper's brigade; but as quickly the pikes were brought to bear, the musketeers poured in their shot, and the first charge was beaten back; before it could be renewed, Skippon had got the brave fellows

ready, the front ranks kneeling, and a forest of long pikes presented to the plunging chargers. The utmost valour of the cavaliers could achieve nothing against the iron formation, while the regular and destructive fire of the musketeers swept the front, and strewed the field with dead and wounded men and horses.

Essex had had another tough encounter with a chosen band of Royalists, who, making a long detour, and adopting the broom and furze twigs which Essex's men wore to distinguish them from the King's men, fell furiously upon his ranks. The conflict that followed was to the death, for if the Royalists were incensed by the stubborn resistance that they met, and by their heavy losses, the Parliamentarians were not the less fiercely revengeful when, after the long strain of that terrible day, they rallied all their energies to beat back the perfidious attack of the Royalists. The desperate melée terminated in favour of Essex's troops, who beat off and chased the Royalists back.

The last scenes of the battle had taken place under the gathering glooms of the September night, and Skippon having succeeded in joining Essex's cavalry, nothing more could be effected

until the morrow. The exhausted armies reluctantly parted, and silence settled over the field that had, during the long day, re-echoed the furious and dreadful sounds of war. Under the peaceful heavens lay 6,000 dead and wounded men, to be carted into the town by the humane burghers, when there was a great outcry for surgeons, always, alas, far too few in number to meet the requirements of war.

Both armies rested on the field, and stood to arms, ready to renew the battle, when the day broke again upon Newbury. Essex had secured his retreat, and could expect to achieve no more. Rupert could force the fighting with no greater skill and daring than he had already exercised, and with no greater prospect of penetrating the ranks of Skippon's pikemen. Essex drew off, unmolested, about noon, but Rupert fell upon his rear near Aldermaston, and inflicted some loss upon his troops. His march upon London was not, however, interrupted, and he entered the city in triumph, having fought a battle that was in all ways honourable to his army, whether nominally a victory or defeat. If the King claimed the honour of the field, it was indeed a barren honour. At every point he had been repulsed,

although his cavalry had sacrificed itself with unmeasured devotion. He had not kept Essex out of Gloucester, and he had not cut off his retreat upon London.

During the battle Essex lost a trained band colonel and a few officers; but Charles lost many gallant and distinguished gentlemen, chief of whom were the Earls of Sunderland and Carnarvon, and the virtuous and talented Lord Falkland. The wounded included some of the first cavalry officers in the Royal army, Lords Chandos, Peterborough, Andover, and Carlisle, Sir Geo. Lisle, Sir Charles Lucas, and Colonels Gerrard, Constable, and Darcy.

In the pages of Clarendon will be found an elaborate account of the virtuous and unfortunate Falkland, who had a strong presentiment that he would perish in the conflict, and he accordingly put on clean linen, and arrayed himself in his richest apparel.

Essex, before marching off, issued orders for the burial "of the dead bodies lying in and about Enborne and Newbury Wash." Charles imposed similar duties upon the mayor of Newbury, expressly intimating that the wounded Parliamentarians were to receive every

attention, and, on their recovery, be sent on to Oxford.

Essex carried with him into rejoicing London "many colours of the King's cornets;" and was there publicly thanked for what his party were disposed to regard as a victory over the King and his gallant cavaliers.

## The Second Battle of Newbury, 1644.

WHEN the second battle of Newbury was fought, the great rebellion had received a decided impetus in favour of the Parliamentarians. Marston Moor had been fought and the greenest laurels of Rupert had withered in one summer's night before the walls of York. The glory of Essex waned before the brilliant achievements and solid successes of Cromwell and Fairfax. The period of drawn battles and disputed victories was passing away.

Some transient successes had attended the royal arms, and Essex had been defeated in Cornwall; but with his army reinforced and reorganised, he was prepared to try conclusions with His Majesty on their old battle ground. With Essex there marched the Earl of Manchester, Skippon, Waller, and Colonels Ludlow and Cromwell. In consequence of the sickness of Essex, the supreme command devolved upon Manchester.

Charles was on the *qui vive* from the 21st, to

Saturday the 26th October; but being ill-informed of the movements of his dangerous adversaries, he was ultimately out-manœuvred, his communications with Oxford cut off, and his rear threatened.

Mr. F. Blundell, F.S.A., in his interesting paper on the "Two Battles of Newbury," thus describes the disposition of the opposing armies :—

"On the next day, Friday, and on Saturday, the 26th, Symond's diary records pithily 'noe action'—both sides, in fact, were busied with their deadly preparations, for all men knew that their next meeting would be a stern and bloody one. The King's horse burned to avenge their recent overthrow on Marston Moor, and Skippon's infantry were resolute to win back the credit they had lost in Cornwall.

"The beleaguered Cavaliers now exerted themselves to retrieve their error, by adding to the strength of their position, throwing up entrenchments and mounting extra batteries. The Earl of Manchester with his vanguard held the lower portion of the town, and Cromwell's Ironsides with some infantry who formed the right wing of the Parliamentarian army, lay still, but not inactive, upon the south side of the Kennett,

near Ham Mill, and 'thence, as soon as it was day,'—says Symonds—'they put a tertia of foot over a bridge which they had made in the night.'

King Charles again led the Cavaliers in person, the young Prince of Wales accompanying him, and the Earl of Brentford acting as Lieutenant-General. The royal standard waved upon Speen Moor, about a mile more northerly than its position during the previous battle, and the main body of the Cavaliers held Speen mainland and the upper town of Newbury, with their lines extending towards the Castle, while their extreme left rested a little below the present site of Donnington turnpike, and crossed the lane which intersects the meadows behind and round about Shaw House, then known as "Dolemans," occupied for the King, and fortified so strongly as to be, in military parlance, 'the key to the entire position.' The river Lambourn flowed along their front; Sir Bernard Astley's and Sir George Lisle's cavalry were stationed round about the fields betwixt the town and Shaw, and 'Dolemans' not only was well garrisoned by musketry and pikes, but had each hedge and hollow of its garden ground and pleasance, well lined with ambushed skirmishers and marksmen."

The burghers of Newbury maintained their accustomed neutrality, to the great disgust of the King, who, complaining that they rendered him no account of the movements of his enemies, stigmatised them as "wicked Roundheads."

The morning of the battle was spent in a distant cannonade, and the desultory skirmishing in which so much martial energy was usually expended. The royal forces made no movement to force the fighting, and Manchester held his hand in the expectation of reinforcements.

During the first movements of the battle, about mid-day, Charles and his son were in some danger of falling into Waller's hands. They were posted at Bagnor, with their guards in attendance, when the Parliamentarians, having seized Speen, made a rapid push for Bagnor. The danger of Charles was imminent, when Colonel Campfield came up on the spur with the Queen's Life Guards, charged furiously, broke the Parliamentarians, and followed them in headlong and vengeful pursuit. Shippon marked the fiery Cavaliers as they swept on in triumph, and threw out a strong body of infantry to check the pursuit, and afford Waller an opportunity of rallying; but as quickly the fierce Goring and

the Earl of Cleveland burst upon the pikemen, threw them into confusion, and bore them sternly back, holding them in deadly play; but the pikemen and musketeers, whether fighting for king or Parliament, were seldom or never routed, and they bore nobly up, dressed their line, and made a stubborn stand; driving off the impetuous Goring with stinging pikes and hail of bullets. Again the persistent Cavaliers fell on, and the pikes trembled before the rushing tide of horse and men as they fell slowly back. Goring eagerly followed up his advantage, when the Parliamentarians opened their ranks, and allowed the assailants to pass through, then reformed to cut off their retreat, and opened a destructive fire. Thus entrapped the Cavaliers fought desperately, Goring cutting his way through with a handful of followers, but leaving Cleveland in the hands of the enemy.

Dolemans, the key of the position, was assailed by Manchester with 3,000 foot and 1,200 horse, a force by no means too powerful for the arduous task to be attempted. Astley and Lucas were not slow to meet the assailing forces, and the sonorous psalms of the Parliamentarians ceased as the battle surges closed. A stubborn and

sanguinary conflict ensued, but Manchester could make no serious impression upon his enemies. Cromwell, holding his troops, ready to strike when the opportune moment arrived, beheld the setting of the sun and the closing shades of night, while the field was as stubbornly contested as ever. He accordingly prepared to strike with his cavalry.

Dividing his brigade, he sent one division to the assistance of Manchester, and with the other fell upon the King's left on Speen Moor. The king and the young prince fled on the spur to find safety beneath the cannon of Donnington, while the Life Guards threw themselves upon Cromwell's troopers, in a gallant attempt to arrest his advance. Vain was their devotion. The Ironsides smote them hip and thigh, shattered their formation, and drove them from the field in headlong flight.

"Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the accurst."

A harder fate befell the second division. Involved among the hedges and avenues of Dolmans, they were decimated by the fire of the royal musketeers, furiously charged by the

cavalry, and driven off in the utmost disorder, after sustaining a loss of 500 men. Edmund Ludlow made a gallant attempt to relieve them, and cover their retreat.

With this last desperate conflict the battle ceased, not to be renewed. The King drew off, and Manchester showed no disposition to attempt any further operations against him. The second battle of Newbury was thus not less hardly fought nor indecisive in its results than was the first.

It is said that the disgust of Cromwell was so great, that it influenced him, to make his accusation against Manchester, with the resulting self-denying ordinance, and its remarkable and wide-extending results.

Mr. Blundell's paper has been closely followed, but the matter necessarily condensed in this sketch.

# Binfield and Easthampstead, 1700—1716, and the Early Years of Alexander Pope.

By Rev. C. W. Penny, M.A.

THERE are few more pleasant and charming country villages in Berkshire than the two adjoining parishes, whose names stand at the head of this chapter. The undulating surface of the land, consisting for the most part of well-wooded and well-watered pastures, and a better soil than prevails in most of the surrounding heaths, must from the first have made an agreeable oasis in this part of the old Forest of Windsor. While their convenient situation, abutting north and south of the old high road, which ran from Reading past Wokingham to Windsor, and so to London, brought these secluded villages into touch, not only with the chief town of the county, but also with the busier life of the Metropolis. And thus, even two hundred years ago, they were an attractive place of residence for many old families that have long since died out and passed away.

The early history of almost every village

centres round its church. And the church at Binfield is no exception to the rule. It lies embowered with trees at the further end of the village, nestling against the slope of a steepish hill. And although the ruthless hand of modern restoration has dealt somewhat hardly both outside and inside with the fabric itself, yet enough of hoar antiquity remains to attract the notice of even the most careless visitor. The venerable but somewhat dumpy tower is built, like those of Warfield and All Saints', Wokingham, of the conglomerate "puddingstone" of the district, and bears significant testimony to the scarceness of good building materials at the date of its erection. For these rugged irregular fragments must have been collected with infinite pains and labour when the "iron pan," as it is called, of the surrounding heath country was broken up, and the land first brought under cultivation.

As we approach the south door, the fine open timbered perpendicular porch, a feature which is characteristic of the churches of the neighbourhood, cannot fail to strike the eye. It is of unusual size, and the carved oak woodwork, black with age, is of superior workmanship.

The interior of the church is full of interest to

the antiquary and the archæologist. For though the roof and arches are low, the pillars and windows poor, and the general architectural effect mean and disappointing, yet the floor and walls are crowded with inscribed and carved grave-stones and memorial tablets of no ordinary character. These, as well as other relics of a bygone age, at once arrest attention.

To begin with the latter first; on a desk near the pillar as we enter is a black letter copy of Erasmus's Paraphrase of the Four Gospels, which at one time was ordered to be provided in every church at the cost of the parish. The copy is almost perfect, and has been carefully re-bound.

Then there is what the successive restorations have left of the fine Jacobean pulpit, with its date, "Ano. Dom. 1628," still upon it; and beside it, though unhappily upon the wrong side, is the elaborate hour-glass stand of hammered iron-work, consisting of oak leaves and acorns, alternately with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, together with three coats-of-arms, said to be those of the Smiths' and Farriers' Company. This is probably of the same date as the pulpit, if we may judge from the very similar iron

frame-work which is attached to the pulpit in Hurst Church, and which bears the date 1636. The pulpit at Binfield has been sadly mutilated; its pedestal and staircase are gone; and its massive sounding-board has been relegated to the ignominious silence and seclusion of the vestry. But, in 1628, it must have been the handsomest pulpit of its kind in the neighbourhood.

On the floor of the sacrarium is a small brass, a half-length figure of a priest, represented with a stunted beard, and the apparels of the amice and albe ornamented with quatrefoils. Underneath is this inscription in Norman French :—

Water de Annesfordbe gist icy,
dieu de sa alme eit mercy.

It is one of the oldest brasses in the kingdom, for the said "Water" was rector of Binfield in 1361. Another remarkable fact about it is, that out of the seven inscriptions of this church recorded in 1664-6 by E. Ashmole in his "Antiquities of Berks," this is the only one which has survived the successive restorations. The other six have entirely gone.

Immediately in front of the altar the floor is composed of a row of six black marble gravestones, each of which has a coat-of-arms elabor-

BINFIELD CHURCH.

ately sculptured at the head. That nearest to the centre is to the memory of Henry, fifth and last Earl of Stirling, of whose family we shall have more to say presently. The remaining five are remarkable as being all of them apparently placed to the memory of Papists who lived in the reign of Charles the II. Indeed, one of them, that, namely, nearest the north aisle, in memory of William Blount, "who dyed in the 21st yeare of his Age on y^e^ 9th of May, 1671," has the letters, "C.A.P.D." engraved at the bottom in large capitals, which stand for the well-known pre-Reformation prayer, "*Cujus Animae Propicietur Deus.*" And it is clear from the names of those commemorated in the other inscriptions that towards the end of Charles the II.'s reign there was a little colony of Papists residing at Binfield.

One of the oldest of these Roman Catholic families was that of Dancastle or Dancaster. They had been lords of the Manor of Binfield since the time of Elizabeth; and a member of the family, John Dancaster, had been rector of Binfield as far back as 1435. The gravestone in the chancel is to the memory of another member, also John Dancaster, who died in 1680, aged eighty-four. And from the coat-of-arms at the

head of it: *Az.*, a ball of wild fire *Or.*, impaling, *Sa.*, three lions passant in bend *Arg.*, between two double cottises of the last, we are able to identify him as the "John Doncastle of Welhouse" in Ashmole's "Pedigrees of Berks," who married Mary, daughter of the Hon. John Browne, younger brother of Anthony, second Viscount Montague. About five years before his death, he and his neighbour, Mr. Gabriel Yonge, with his wife Elizabeth, whose gravestone comes next, were excommunicated by the then rector of Binfield, most probably for the non-payment of tithes or other ecclesiastical dues.

In an "Alphabetical List of the Recusants in the County of Berks," who entered the annual value of their estates for the purpose of being double taxed, pursuant to an Act passed in 1715, John Dancastle, probably the son of the above John Dancastle, is assessed at £234 10s., and his son, Francis Dancastle, at £1 17s. *per annum.* While to the south wall of Binfield Church is affixed a tablet which records the final extinction of the race. It was erected in memory of yet another John Dancastle, "the last of a respectable and ancient family, who after patiently

enduring the most excruciating pains of the Gout, without intermission for upwards of sixteen years, obtained a happy release, and passed to a country where grief, sorrow, and pain are no more, Jan$^{y}$ 29th, 1780. Aged 53 years. R.I.P."

The chief interest in the Dancastle family for us lies in the fact that it was owing to them that the poet, Alexander Pope, came to live at Binfield. About the year 1700, the representatives of this family at Binfield were two brothers, named Thomas and John. Very little is known about them except what may be gathered incidentally from the correspondence of Pope. It is believed that they lived at the Manor House at Binfield, and that it was owing to the friendship between Alexander Pope the elder and John Dancastle that the former was induced to settle at Binfield in 1700, when his son, the future poet, was just twelve years of age. After the migration to Binfield, the similarity of their tastes, for both were passionately fond of gardening, no doubt increased the intimacy; and we find that John Dancastle was the first witness to the elder Pope's will.

Scarcely anything is known for certain of the family history of the Popes before the settlement

at Binfield, except that Pope's grandfather was a clergyman of the Church of England, and that he placed his son, the poet's father, with a merchant at Lisbon, where he became a convert to the Church of Rome. On his return to England, he seems to have been unsuccessful in his business affairs. Hearne, the antiquary, speaks of him (*Diary*, July 18th, 1729) as a "poor ignorant man, a tanner;" and elsewhere as "a sort of broken merchant," who had been "said to be a mechanic, a hatter, a farmer, nay, a bankrupt." But these were probably the false libels which were levelled against the son in after years in revenge for his keen and bitter satire.

It is now generally agreed that Mr. Pope, senior, was a linen draper in London at the time his son was born; and whatever may have been his success or want of success in that business, we know that, in 1700, he bought a small estate and house at Binfield, where he resided for the next sixteen years. He had an income, so Hearne tells us, of between three and four hundred a year.

The house can now hardly be said to exist. Pope himself described it as:—

"My paternal cell,
A little house with trees a-row,
And like its master very low;"

where the retired merchant employed his time chiefly in the cultivation of his garden, and as his son said;—

"Plants cauliflowers, and boasts to rear
The earliest melons of the year."

But successive owners have so pulled down and rebuilt it, that nothing now remains of the original house except one room, which tradition says was the poet's study. There is an engraving of this in E. Jesse's "Favorite Haunts and Rural Studies," published by J. Murray in 1847 (p. 90). The present house, formerly known as Pope's Wood, is now called Arthurstone, and belongs to J. W. Macnabb, Esq.

There is no doubt that besides the Dancastles and the other Papist families at Binfield, there were numerous Roman Catholics settled in the neighbourhood. In particular we find that Pope often visited, and was intimate with, the Blounts, of Mapledurham; the Carylls, of Ladyholt; and the Englefields, of Whiteknights. At the house of the last, he used to meet Wycherly, who introduced him to London life, and Miss

Arabella Fermor, the heroine of the "Rape of the Lock." But it is not a little remarkable that the Popes at Binfield appear to have associated exclusively with their Roman Catholic friends. Throughout the whole of Pope's letters there does not appear a single allusion to the other county families that were undoubtedly residing at Binfield at this time, and whose gravestones cover a goodly portion of the floor of the church; for instance, the two branches of the Lee family and the Alexanders, Earls of Stirling.

Here then, from the age of twelve, the poet grew up a solitary, precocious child. He had indeed a half-sister, Magdalen, the only child of Mr. Pope's first wife. But she was a good deal, at least ten or twelve years, older than her brother, and at this time, or soon after, was married to a Mr. Rackett, and lived at Hall Grove, on Bagshot Heath. For a short time, a few months only after the settlement at Binfield he was placed under the charge of a priest, the fourth that had taught him in succession. "This," he says, "was all the teaching I ever had, and, God knows, it extended a very little way."

His parents indulged his every whim, and accordingly the boy spent his mornings in

desultory reading, ranging freely and widely at will through English, Italian, and Latin literature. In the afternoons he wandered alone amidst the surrounding woods, and fed his imagination with musings upon the studies of the morning, or feasted his eyes with the beautiful landscape around him. In particular he is known to have haunted a grove of noble beech trees, still called Pope's Wood, which grew about half-a-mile from his father's house. On one of these was cut the words "*Here Pope sang*;" and for many years the letters were annually refreshed by the care of a lady residing near Wokingham. This tree was blown down in a gale, and the words were carved anew upon the next tree; but when this also fell some years ago the inscription was not renewed.*

* This was the case until quite recently; but towards the end of 1893, the late Mr. Hutchinson Browne, of Moor Close, Binfield, caused the words, "*Here Pope Sung*," to be once more cut in the bark of a tree growing on the site as Pope's wood. And underneath them he affixed a brass plate inscribed with the following elegant copy of verses in Latin and English, which I was fortunate in obtaining for him from the pen of the Rev. Charles Stanwell, Vicar of Ipsden, Oxon:—

"Angliacis resonare modis qui suasit Homerum
Hic cecinit laudes, Vindelisora, tuas;
Hinc Silvae nomen vates dedit; arboris olim
Inciso testis cortice truncus evat.
Silva diu periit, sed nomen et umbra supersunt.
Umbra viri circum, nomen ubique volat."

"He to our Lyre who wooed great Homer's strain,
Here sang the praise of Windsor's sylvan reign;
Hence gained the wood a poet's name; of old
The attesting trunk, inscribed, the story told.
The wood hath perished, but surviving still
His shade these haunts, his name the world doth fill."—C. W. P.

Every evening on his return home the "marvellous boy" committed to paper the results of his communing with the Muses in the leafy grove. In this way he composed and wrote out many juvenile verses, amongst others an epic poem of more than four thousand lines, which in after years his matured taste consigned to the flames. So close an application, combined with complete isolation from all companionship of children of his own age, was certain in the end to affect disastrously his mental constitution as well as his bodily health. Accordingly we find that he never shook off the morbid self-consciousness which his solitary childhood had developed in him. And there is no doubt that his singular propensity to tricks and plots, which increased upon him with increasing age, even to the end of his life, was fostered by the atmosphere of evasion and deceit, in which, owing to the severe penal laws against Papists, he was necessarily brought up, and which in his case was never corrected by the wholesome training, if rough experience of a public school.

At the same time his intense application, untempered by any distraction of games or amusements, produced its natural results in a constitution

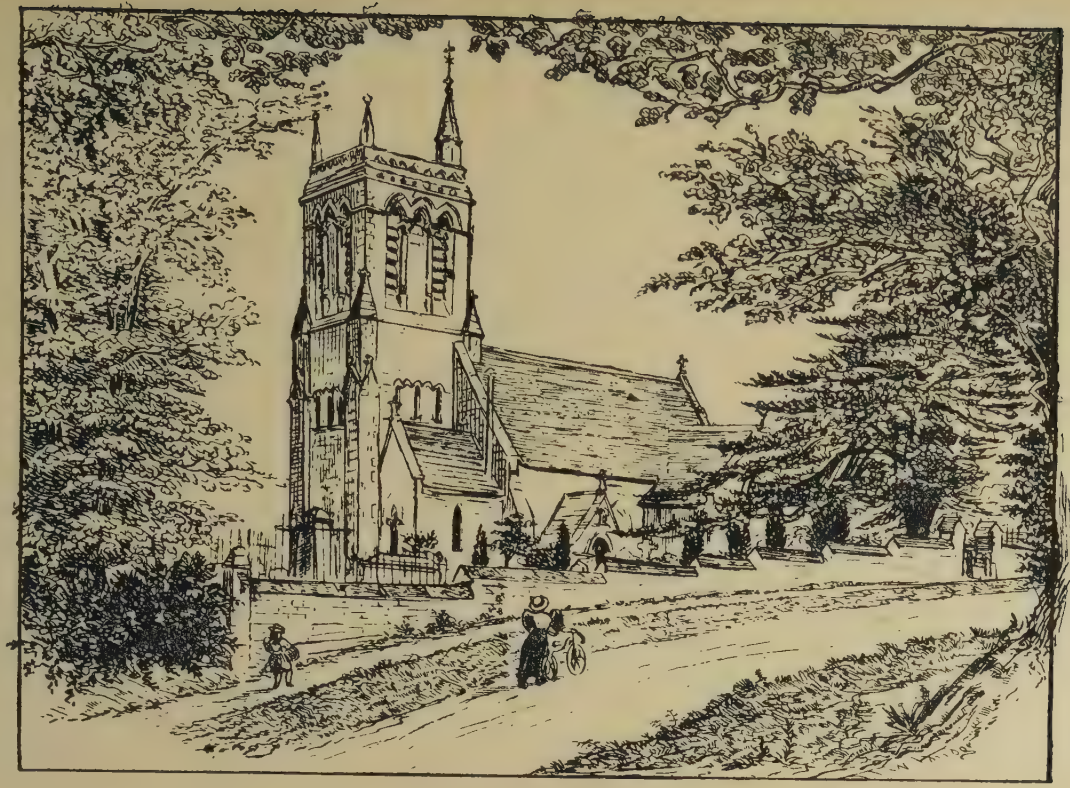
by nature weakly, and began by the time he was sixteen years of age seriously to affect his health. He tried many physicians to no purpose, and finding himself daily growing worse thought he had not long to live. He therefore calmly sat down and wrote to take leave of all his friends. Amongst others he sent a last farewell to the Abbé Southcote, who lived near Abingdon. The Abbé, thinking that Pope's malady was mental rather than physical, went to his friend Dr. Radcliffe, the famous physician of Oxford, and described to him the boy's condition. Armed with full directions the Abbé hastened to Binfield, to enforce with all the ardour of friendship the doctor's chief prescriptions—strict diet, less study and a daily ride in the open air.

In this way Pope, while riding in the Forest, began first to meet, then to know, and finally to be intimate with the squire of the neighbouring village. Easthampstead Park was at this time occupied by the veteran statesman, Sir William Trumbull, Knt. He had lived abroad for many years as ambassador, first at Paris and then at Constantinople. On his return home he had been appointed Secretary of State to William III.,

and now quite recently, in 1697, he had resigned all his appointments and had retired to end his days peacefully at home.

At this time he was a widower, his first wife, Lady Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Charles Cotterell, having died in July, 1704. He soon after married Lady Judith Alexander, youngest daughter of Henry, 4th Earl of Stirling, who at that time was residing at Binfield, though in what house is not now known. Sir William was then almost seventy years of age, having been born apparently about the year 1636, and had no children. And thus it is easy to understand how the forlorn old man, riding often no doubt in the direction of Binfield in search of his second wife, frequently met the invalid poet as he left home in search of health, through the devious maze of drives in Windsor Forest, on which even then he was meditating to write a poem.

Long residence in France and Turkey had no doubt made Trumbull a citizen of the world. His capacious mind would have no room in it for the prejudices against Papists, which in England at that time were very strong, and in country districts banished them from ordinary society.



EAST HAMPSTEAD CHURCH.

Nor was the discrepancy of their years, seventy and seventeen, any bar to their growing friendship. Like all solitary children, especially the children of aged parents, Pope, even when a boy, seems always to have preferred the company and friendship of elderly men. Another link too was doubtless their mutual incapacity for shooting and hunting, then, as now, the ordinary pursuits of country gentlemen. Sir William Trumbull's long absence from England throughout his youth (for he was educated at Montpellier, in France, during the troubles of the Commonwealth) and in middle life, when he was engaged in the service of his country abroad, indisposed him as an old man to begin a new kind of life, and Pope's crooked frame and feeble health forbad him altogether to join in such sports. In 1705 he wrote to his friend Wycherly :—

"Ours are a sort of inoffensive people, who neither have sense nor pretend to any, but enjoy a jovial kind of dulness. They are commonly known in the world by the name of honest, civil gentlemen. They live much as they ride, at random—a kind of hunting life, pursuing with earnestness and hazard something not worth the catching; never in the way nor out of it. I

cannot but prefer solitude to the company of all these." . . .

And in another letter he wrote to his friend Cromwell in the same strain :—

"I assure you I am looked upon in the neighbourhood for a very sober and well-disposed person, no great hunter indeed, but a great esteemer of that noble sport, and only unhappy in my want of constitution for that and drinking. They all say 'tis pity I am so sickly, and I think 'tis a pity they are so healthy ; but I say nothing that may destroy their good opinion of me."

Besides this, an additional link in the chain which united the two friends was the similarity of their tastes in literature. Sir William Trumbull, who, in his early days, had been Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford, had kept up his scholarship, and retained to the last day of his life his early fondness for Greek and Latin authors.

The results of this friendship were of immense advantage to Pope. His earliest published poems, *The Pastorals*, modelled on Virgil's Eclogues, were first submitted to and discussed with Trumbull, as they rode together about the Forest, and the first Pastoral with much propriety was dedicated to his venerable friend. It was Trum-

bull who first suggested to Pope that he should undertake the translation of the Iliad, and thereby laid the foundation of his affluence. But far more than this, when the poet first went to London, and seemed, under the guidance of the old reprobate Wycherly, to be falling into evil ways, it was Trumbull who implored him to retrace his steps. "I now come," he wrote, "to what is of vast moment, I mean the preservation of your health, and beg of you earnestly to get out of all tavern company, and fly away from it *tanquam ex incendio.*" As long as Pope remained at Binfield, their friendship was warm and unabated. In striking contrast with every other intimacy between Pope and his friends no coldness or quarrel ever arose between them. In April, 1716, the Popes left Binfield and removed to Chiswick, and in the following December Sir William Trumbull died.

To return; in the meanwhile the elder Pope devoted himself to gardening, in the art of which, as we have seen, he was no mean proficient. A rival in the same pursuit was his friend, Mr. John Dancastle. And we find amongst the poet's correspondence a letter from Sir William Trumbull thanking Pope's father for sending him

a present of "hartichokes" of superior size and excellence; and in another letter Mr. John Dancastle excuses himself, after the Popes had left, for not being able to procure them "some white Strabery plants" such as apparently the elder Pope had reared in the old garden at Binfield.

While the father was thus occupied in gardening, the son was gradually creeping into notice as a poet. His early poems and shorter pieces appeared at first in Tonson's or Lintot's "Miscellanies," or the "Spectator," and similar publications. But as he became more widely known, Pope ventured on independent publication by the then usual mode of introducing new works, namely by subscription. In this way his fine poems the *Essay on Criticism*, *Windsor Forest*, and the *Rape of the Lock*, all written and composed at Binfield, appeared successively in 1711, 1713, and 1714.

The first of these poems should be mentioned for two reasons. It led to Pope's first introduction to London life, when he made the acquaintance of the famous wits of the period, Steele, Addison, Gay, and Swift. And it also was the cause of the first of those literary quarrels in which Pope's talent for satire henceforth involved him

more or less as long as he lived. Resenting some adverse criticism of his *Pastorals*, he inserted in the *Essay on Criticism* the following lines :—

> "'Twere well might critics still their freedom take,
> But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
> And stares tremendous with a threatening eye
> Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry."

John Dennis, the writer thus lampooned as "Appius," retorted in a prose pamphlet, in which he described his assailant as a "hunch-backed toad," and went on to say : "If you have a mind to inquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young, short, squab gentleman, an eternal writer of amorous pastoral madrigals and the very bow of the god of love, you will be soon directed to him. And pray, as soon as you have taken a survey of him, tell me whether he is a proper author to make personal reflections."

In his poem *Windsor Forest* it was natural that Pope should commemorate his friendship and intercourse with Sir William Trumbull, by describing in graceful verse the peaceful occupations of his aged friend's declining years.

> "Happy [the man], who to these shades retires,
> Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires :
> Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
> Successive study, exercise, and ease.

He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields;

. . . . . .

Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;
O'er figured worlds now travels with his eye;
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er.

. . . .

Or looks on heaven with more than mortal eyes,
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home!
Such was the life great Scipio once admired,
Thus Atticus, and Trumbal thus retired."

Of the *Rape of the Lock* it will suffice to say that even now some critics reckon it as Pope's masterpiece. As a specimen of the Mock Heroic Epic Poem it has no rival in the English language. Here it chiefly concerns us as a true and lifelike picture of fashionable manners prevailing in country houses in the reign of Queen Anne.

The publication of these poems made frequent journeys to London necessary, in order to settle terms with the publishers and other literary business. The *Rape of the Lock* was immediately successful, three thousand copies being sold in four days, and it was at once reprinted. Pope's fame was therefore now established firmly, but

hitherto the sums which he had received for his poems would seem to have been very inconsiderable. He appears to have received thirty pounds for *Windsor Forest*, and only half that sum each for the *Essay on Criticism* and the *Rape of the Lock*.

He now bethought him, therefore, of Sir William Trumbull's former suggestisn that he should translate Homer, and in October, 1713, he issued his Proposals to the Public. His friends in London interested themselves in the subscription. Dean Swift, in particular, said he should not rest until he had secured for him a thousand pounds. And so flattering was the response, that in 1715 the family was enabled to live more at ease. It was now evident that their present abode was too far from London, for one who had constant negotiations with the booksellers and the Popes determined to leave Binfield, and accordingly their house there was sold towards the end of 1715. It was bought by a Mr. Tanner, whose gravestone is one of those described in the beginning of this chapter as lying in front of the altar. He was probably a Papist, certainly a Non-Juror, for Hearne, who records the fact, terms him "an honest man," which is

Hearne's well-known periphrasis for denoting those who were Jacobites in politics.

The last two years of his life at Binfield, Pope spent in translating the Iliad, or rather, for he was too poor a Greek scholar to read it in the original, in versifying other people's translations of it. Good old Sir William Trumbull no doubt helped him whenever a passage of extra difficulty perplexed the poet. And Mr. Thomas Dancastle, the Squire of Binfield, was so delighted with his young friend's enterprise that at infinite pains and labour he made a fair copy of the whole translation for the press. It also appears from Pope's MSS. that he occasionally indulged his affectionate and amiable mother in allowing her to transcribe a portion. But alas! poor Mrs. Pope had had but a slender education. In the single letter of hers, which has been published, the spelling is surprisingly phonetic. Alluding to a portion of the Iliad she writes to her son: "He will not faile to cole here on Friday morning, and take ceare to cearrie itt to Mr. Thomas Doncaster. He shall dine wone day with Mrs. Dune, in Ducke (*i.e.*, Duke) Street; but the day will be unsirton, soe I thincke you had better send itt to me. He will not faile to

cole here, that is Mr. Mannock." And the numerous corrections made in his own hand, sufficiently show that her mode of spelling gave Pope more trouble than all the subsequent inaccuracies of the printers.

Our period draws to its close. In June, 1715, the first volume of Pope's Homer, containing the first four books of the Iliad came out. It has been calculated that for the six volumes in which the translation was comprised Pope received from Lintot more than £5,000. And as the greater portion of this sum was paid in advance his circumstances at once became not only easy but affluent. The end of the year was spent in preparing to migrate to Chiswick. It must be remembered that the new year then began in March, and on March 20, $17\frac{15}{16}$, Pope wrote to his friend Caryll as follows:—

"I write this from Windsor Forest, which I am come to take my last look and leave of. We have bid our Papist neighbours adieu, much as those who go to be hanged do their fellow-prisoners who are condemned to follow them a few weeks after. I was at Whiteknights, where I found the young ladies I just now mentioned [Theresa and Martha Blount] spoken of a little

more coldly than I could at this time especially * have wished. I parted from honest Mr Dancastle with tenderness, and from Sir William Trumbull as from a venerable prophet, foretelling with lifted hands the miseries to come upon posterity which he was just going to be removed from."

Sir William died in the December following in his 78th year, leaving an only son, also William Trumbull, barely eight years old. The subsequent history of Binfield and Easthampstead does not fall within the limits of this chapter. It must suffice to say that Pope occasionally visited the Dancastles, and possibly stayed with Lady Judith Trumbull. At all events he recommended his friend, Elijah Fenton, the poet, to be her son's tutor, and frequently corresponded with him at Easthamptead. Fenton continued to reside there even after young Trumbull grew to man's estate, and when Fenton died in 1730, Pope wrote the epitaph which is still to be seen inscribed upon the tablet erected by William Trumbull to his memory, on the north wall of Easthampstead Church.

* Mrs. Blount and her two daughters were on the point of quitting Mapledurham in consequence of the marriage of her son, Michael Blount, in 1715.

# Berkshire Words and Phrases.

By Rev. M. J. Bacon.

IT is not easy to determine in a subject of this kind what are the strict lines of demarcation which separate words and phrases used within a specific area from those used elsewhere, or again, in many instances, to decide what is dialect, and what mere local pronunciation. Where the area is confined to the limit of a county, the difficulties are increased, as the dwellers near the borders would naturally be influenced by the characteristics of the neighbouring county. Thus Berkshire folk on the Wiltshire side of the county would differ in many respects from those on the Hampshire side; and while the verb to *kite*, for instance, would be unknown to the one, the adjective *deedy* would be equally strange to the other.

Probably, next to verbs and adjectives, the names given to birds and animals, implements, or any common object, would determine a man's county. Phrases are less

numerous, but adjectives rank first among local peculiarities.

Many of these convey the same idea, but are applied to different objects, and in different ways. Thus in Berkshire *chuff*, *pruff*, *fess*, *peart*, and *sprack*, all imply something sharp, smart, or perky; but *pruff* is applied solely to vegetable life, such as young and healthy shoots, buds, or growing plants; while a sharp, quick mannered man may be either *chuff* or *fess*. "Speak up, *chuff*, now," is the adjuration of the parent to the bashful child who has just been addressed by the *quality*. *Fess* will be recognised at once as the *fierce* of the Eastern counties, implying a certain amount of vigour, indeed, but conveying no idea of savagery or temper. *Peart* and *sprack* speak for themselves.

Next come *bristle* and *briffut*, used both as nouns and verbs, though the former is more often the substantive, expressing a sharp, active fellow, or perhaps a terrier, who would *briffut about* in search of rats. The adjective *deedy*, on the other hand, is careful, wary, cautious, almost the Yankee '*cute*, and is usually intensified by *main*, very. "What sort of a girl is your daughter?" asked the late Baron Huddleston of the mother

of a young girl who had just given evidence in an important case in the Reading Assize Court. "She be a main deedy little girl, my Lord," was the reply. "Greedy, did you say?" "No, my Lord, deedy—main deedy." But Reading is not central enough in the county for anyone in court to have replied to his Lordship's puzzled look of enquiry.

Besides *main*, *feart*, or *feartish*, is used to emphasise an expression. "He be a *main sight*, or a *feartish deal* better," or perhaps "only *tar'blish*," a contraction of tolerablish. In like manner, the patient would *change* for the better, but *alter* for the worse, while *a bit altery* would apply to the weather *tokening* for rain. *Smart* is used to qualify another word, as *a smart few*, meaning a good many, or it would *rain smartish*. Other words, sometimes corruptions, are common, as *unked*, awkward, in the sense of obstinate, troublesome; *stomachy*, proud, self-willed; *quisiting*, inquisitive; *querky*, querulous; *wangery*, languid; *shackelty*, shaky; *hechatty*, onomatopœan, applied to a cough; *peaked*, pronounced *pikkid*, pointed, as the end of a stick; *worriting* for worrying, though *terrifying* is more often used, to *terrify* and to *worrit* being synomy

mous. *Casualty* is risky, hollies being considered *casualty things* to plant, while it is often *casualty weather* in hay-making time. To be *in a ferrick* is to be in a fidget, and *all of a caddle* in a muddle. *Heft* is weight, and *hefty*, weighty. To poise anything in the hand to test its weight would be to *heft* it. *Overright* is opposite, a word unknown to the aborigines; but what a "Leicestershire mon" would call *over yon*, is expressed by his Berkshire compeer as *athurt thur*, evidently a corruption of athwart there. *Overright* would, of course, be originally rightover, and this tendency to put the cart before the horse is common. *Droo wet* is always used for wet through. The same peculiarity appears elsewhere, as in *breakstuff* for breakfast, and even in monosyllables, as *hapse* for hasp, *clapse* for clasp, and *aks* for ask. This last, however, is by no means confined to Berkshire.

Some of the verbs are original, while others bear signs of being simply mispronunciations. To *quilt* is to swallow; to *plim* to swell, like rice in the boiling; to *huck* to dig up, or empty. A man *hucks out* a gutter or ditch, or simply *hucks* his potatoes. To *tuck* is probably originally to pluck, and is applied to dressing the sides of a

newly made rick with the hand to make it trim and neat. To *kite*, or *kite up*, is to look up sharp or peeringly; while bees are indifferently said to *bite* or *tang*. "They do tang I," would seem to preclude any derivation from sting, as it undoubtedly is. To *argue* is used in its proper sense, and is very common; but it is always turned into the monosyllable *arg*.

It is not surprising to find peculiarities in the common objects and customs of everyday life. Thus the eleven o'clock *snack* under the hedge, known elsewhere as *elevenses*, is *nuncheon*; and so it comes to pass that a horse deficient in barrel is spoken of disparagingly as having "no nuncheon bag." A bradawl is a *nalpasser*, no doubt "nail-passer"; but a gimlet retains its name, and is not called a *twinnet*, as in some places. A *duckut* is a small bill hook for cutting faggots; while a *fag-hook*, or *fagging-hook*, is a crooked stick used instead of the left hand in clearing a bank of nettles, etc., with an iron "hook." The new mown hay is termed *eddish*, while *tedding out* hay is spreading it out in the sun after it has been mown. The hay-loft over the stable, often the sleeping place of the *fogger* (*forager*), the man who tends the cattle, is called the *tallut*;

the smallest pig in the litter, elsewhere either the "cad" or "darling," is invariably the *runt*; a dog's fangs are *tushes*, and a bird's claws *nippens*. In the poultry-yard and pigeon-cote the cock-bird is the *tom*; and some of the wild birds have their peculiar names assigned them. Thus the *wry-neck*, or cuckoo's mate, is the *pe-pe* bird, from its note; a *wish* wagtail is a *dasher*; a woodpecker a *yaffingal*; and the golden plover a *whistling dovyer*. The little white moth that flits about in the twilight at sundown in the summer months is a *margiowlet*, and the steady, plodding mole, is either a *want* or a *mouldiwarp*.

Berkshire stands confessedly at the head of all pig-breeding counties, but that is no reason why the usual call of "choog, choog, choogy," at feeding time, should be changed to "teg, teg, teggy." The cattle call of *coop, coop*, is of course a corruption of "come, come"; and *coobid, coobiddy*, the poultry call of "come hither." The carter, walking on the near side of his horses, calls them towards him by *coomither*, or *coomither-awo-oy*, or more frequently *holt*, or *holt tóward*, with the accent on the first syllable of "toward," and sends them to the off side with the monosyllable *wug*. It is not often that the Berkshire

man stoops to abuse, for he is naturally easy-going, stolid, and impassive; but a driven cow taking a wrong turn would inevitably be denounced as an *old faggot*, and a troublesome boy be branded as a *young radical*, though without any political signification attached. A simile would not be looked for amongst essentially an unimaginative folk, but *as 'pright as a dish* is common, and singularly inappropriate.

Of superstition there is comparatively little, and ghosts and witches meet with but little respect, the men believing that a good "vowld-stake (i.e. fold-stake) is a sufficient weapon in all cases of emergency, and the women being fully as undaunted as the men. There is, however, a curious old Berkshire saying, that "a spayed bitch will catch a witch," and that there is some faith in the truth of the saying is shown by the fact that sheep dogs, if of the feminine gender, used frequently to be so treated.

Every race has its physical peculiarity, and where the negro is tenderest, the Berkshire man is toughest,—in his shins. As a backstop he prefers to stop the fastest balls with his shins, rather than with his hands, and will keep on all day without apparent inconvenience. At "back-

swording" Berkshire men were always renowned; but it was necessarily the privilege of the few, the ordinary farm labourer having no opportunity for practising it. Some other test of endurance must therefore be accepted; and forty years ago it was the regular custom, when two carters stopped at a way-side public-house, for the men to shake hands first, in token of friendship, and then to indulge in the pastime of either *cutlegs* or *kickshins*, the former consisting of the men standing apart, and lashing each others legs with their long cart whips till one cried "Hold," while in *kickshins* each man took firm grip of his opponent by twisting both hands in the overlapping collar of his smock frock, and then kicking with his hob-nailed boots at the other's shins, the vanguished one of course paying for both pots of ale before they started once more on their respective journeys. There was living in the Lambourn valley, less than forty years ago, a man who was considered the champion of the county side, and his shins were knotted and bent and twisted in the most remarkable manner, as the result of his numerous encounters.

Heavy of gait, stolid of mien, and of indomitable courage, the true Berkshire man is a

staunch friend, and a very poor enemy, for he harbours no resentment. Imperturbable to the last degree, he is rarely surprised into an exclamation of surprise, excitement, or satisfaction. When he is, *Dal-lee*, with a strong accent on the last syllable, is his sole resource. "Dal-*lee*! that's got 'un," says the carpenter with a grunt of satisfaction, as he gives the finishing blow that drives home a big nail at which he has been pounding. Its derivation may not be hard to find, but it makes the Berkshire man no worse than his neighbours after all.

But all these things are relics of a past age now. Shins are tenderer, mouths less wide, or at least the dialect is less broad; and the certificated schoolmaster and the railways have done their deadly work.

*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.*

# Bull-Baiting in Berkshire.

By Rev. Canon Sturges.

THE character of a people is reflected in their amusements. The gradual decline of the popularity of rough and cruel sports is a sure indication that there has been corresponding improvement in the people themselves. The History of Sports will show how slowly and yet how continuously this improvement has gone on under the influence of Christian civilization.

It was not until christian teaching had been leavening society for 400 years that public opinion was educated up to the point of abolishing the gladatorial contests, and the wholesale massacres of the Roman amphitheatre. For nearly a thousand years more the lists, within which men-at-arms met in mortal combat to shew their skill or settle their quarrels, were the very chiefest places of amusement in our own land. There king and nobles would sit on seats raised above the crowd, and fairest ladies gave the signal to begin, and presented the reward to

the victor when the games were over. The common people crowded round the enclosure, while all watched the armed men tilting at one another on horseback, or dealing mighty blows with sword and buckler, and when a spear's head penetrated a knight's corslet, and he fell from his horse, and his life's blood oozed out on the ground, or when a downward sweep of a great two-handed sword fell on a footman's helmet, cleaving it and the head beneath it in two, as sometimes happened, the men in the crowd did not turn sick, nor the women scream and faint, as would be the case now if such sights were seen, but the men clapped their hands and cheered, and the women waved their handkerchiefs, and put on their sweetest smiles for him who dealt the fatal blow. In time that class of exhibitions passed out of use, and another took its place, and survived to within the memory of living persons. No longer was the stake played for human life, but for the humbler one of the life of a brute. Sometimes, indeed, the highest in the land would mingle with the lowest, for the pleasure of seeing a couple of strong men battering one another's faces into shapeless mass with fists, until one of the two

could no longer stand. But the commoner and more generally approved sport was that which transferred the duty of being done to death for the amusement of mankind, from man himself to the dumb helpless creatures that have been committed to man's care, and set apart for his lawful use. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, rat-killing, dog-fighting, and such like, were for several centuries his favourite amusements.* Queen Elizabeth was an enthusiastic patroness of baiting. The master of the bears, bulls, and dogs, was one of the officers of the Royal household during her reign, and in several subsequent reigns. She was wont to entertain ambassadors to her court, with bull and bear-baiting after a state dinner In 1591 an order of the Privy council was issued forbidding plays to be acted on Thursdays, because "bear-baiting and such like pastimes had usually been practised on that day." Thus Shakespeare was silenced every Thursday, lest the bull-ring should be neglected.

It was not until the beginning of the present century that the conscience of the nation began

* Erasmus, the reformer, speaks of 'many herds' of bears which he saw being trained for baiting when he was in England in the reign of Henry VIII.

to revolt against the continuance of this barbarous sport. In 1802 an attempt was made in the House of Commons to pass a bill to suppress it. The question was argued with much warmth, and the bill was lost. In 1835 public opinion had so far advanced that a bill was passed without much difficulty, by which it became illegal henceforth to bait or worry any bear, bull, dog, or other animal. And thus after seven centuries of popularity, bull-baiting ceased to be a public amusement.

We should like now to take our readers, as far as we can by a descriptive narrative, to one of the bull-baitings of Berkshire as they were conducted sixty years ago. There are plenty of places we might select for our visit. Every town in the county and every considerable village had its common or ground where the greensward was reddened at least once a year with the blood of bulls and dogs. Strangely enough the favourite day for the great bait of the year was Good Friday.

The best place we can select for our visit will be Wokingham. It is a comfort to know that there at least the baiting will not be on Good Friday. St. Thomas's Day, Dec. 21st, has been

the day there set apart for many generations for the sacrifice of bulls by dog-torture. And there the sport enjoys an endowment and so flourishes wonderfully, outdoing in the fame of its bull-baiting all other towns and parishes in the county of Berks. The endowment arose in this way. One, George Staverton, a lover of the sport, having himself, it is said, been gored by a bull, charged his estate with £6 a year to provide a bull for baiting. Whether he meant it as a revenge on the whole bull race for his injuries, or, as the expression of a good-natured wish, that others should enjoy the sport from which he had himself received so much pleasure, we are left to guess. But this we know, that the bequest increased in value, and soon was sufficient to buy two bulls at least every year; and in 1815, which is the year to which we are going to take our readers back to witness the Wokingham bull-baiting, anyone strolling through the streets of the town, any day of the year, would have had abundant evidence that the sport was held in great estimation by the inhabitants. At many a cottage door was to be seen a specimen of the true British bull-dog. Sometimes the animal had a silver collar, betokening past victories won over

the bull. All were sleek, and evidently objects of much care and interest, often of much more than were bestowed on the children of the house.

The 21st of December, 1815, was a cold, damp, dull day. Two hours before noon, a young fellow drove out of Reading with a companion to see the Wokingham bull-baiting. As they drew near the town, the road became crowded with carriages and pedestrians hurrying in the same direction.* Arrived at the Market Place, the younger man found a place in a window overlooking the scene, while the elder, a tall fellow, evidently a *habituè* of the bull-ring, joined the crowd outside. The spectators filled every window, and in some cases had seated themselves on the roofs of the houses. Carriages, filled with occupants, were drawn up in front of the shops, and all available standing room on the footpaths and roadway was filled by visitors, towns-people, and parishioners. A cry arises "room for the Alderman and Burgesses." The Corporation of Wokingham dates from Saxon times, and the chief-magistrate

* This description is taken from "The Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," published in *The Reading Observer*. He describes a visit made by himself when a youth, to Wokingham, under the guidance of an elder companion, to see the bull-baiting. Other particulars have been derived from information given to the writer of this article by those, most of them now dead, who were spectators of the sports.

was still called "the Alderman," the town having refused steadily for eight centuries to adopt the new-fangled Norman title of "Mayor." The remaining members of the Corporation were "burgesses." Here they come, first pushing a way through the crowd, two "ale-tasters" with wands of office surmounted by the acorn, the Corporation crest; then two sergeants of the mace, the mace-bearer, the alderman, burgesses, town clerk, and others. The alderman takes his seat with his friends in the large window of the old "Red Lion Inn," and gives the signal that the sport is to begin. Shouts are heard and a commotion is evident in a corner of the crowd. Here he comes, the first bull, led by a dozen strong men, a rope round his horns and a chain fifteen feet long, into the middle of the market place, where the end of the chain is fastened to a strong staple in a post level with the ground. Away go his keepers. In a moment the bull has cleared a ring for the coming contest. With head down and tail erect, he sweeps round at the full extent of his chain, and is all alone in the centre of a circle thirty feet in diameter.

"A lane! a lane!" and quickly the crowd has given way to form a narrow passage, at the end

of which we see a man holding a dog between his knees. It is the first dog to be set on; his owner cries, "Set on!" and the dog loosed tears down the lane, through hoops held at regular intervals, right at the face of the bull, who has heard his yelp, and is waiting for him. The dog goes for the bull's nose; the animal keeps him off by always presenting a horn to his advance. We notice he does not *prod* at the dog, but tries to sweep the horn along the ground under the dog's belly. The dog, quite conscious of the meaning of these tactics, is never for a moment still, but dancing to and fro, tries to get through the bull's guard. It seems for a while that this game of attack and defence might go on for the whole day. But suddenly the bull has managed to get his horn beneath the dog, and up he goes into the air, some twenty or thirty feet high. "Catch the dog, quick. He'll be done for if he touches ground." And see our friend from Reading holding out a pair of long arms, and down comes the dog, bespattering, as he falls into them, the man's face and clothes with blood and mud. When the day is over, many, who came out in holiday clothes, will return home sorry spectacles from dog-catching,

covered with filth, and with torn and disordered clothes.

Another dog is now ready. His fate is more speedily determined than that of his predecessor. The bull, almost immediately, sends him flying into the air, so high that he falls on the roof of the Town Hall, and in coming down is impaled on some spikes.

This is a grand stroke by which the present bull has outdone all former bulls that have been fastened to that chain and stake for many a year. And while the poor dog is writhing and whining piteously, the crowd applauds vociferously. In one of the smaller carriages, two school boys occupy the back seat. These boys are now standing up, wildly clapping their hands and hurrahing, while the dog on the roof still writhes and cries out in its agony. One of those boys will live to be a farmer in Wokingham, and be well known for his love of animals. More than seventy years after the event he will often tell of this, his only visit to the bull-baiting, and express his wonder by what strange contagion he could have caught the spirit of that cruel crowd, and witnessed, with delirious delight, animal torture, which on any other

day of his life would have brought tears to his eyes.*

And now a third dog is set on. Whether the bull is tired or demoralized by the applause he has just received we cannot tell; but certain it is that number three almost at once succeeds in fastening his teeth in the cartilage of the bull's nose. "A pin! a pin!" "The dog has pinned the bull!" and the animal tosses its head up and down in a frenzy of wrath and terror, trying to shake off the dog. But he might as well try to shake off his own horns. A story is told of a man who made a bet, and won it, that he would cut off each of his dog's legs in succession without his letting go, when once he had got his teeth in the bull.

The owner of the present dog with the assistance of other men forces the dog's mouth open with a stick, and so gets him away, but not without tearing the bull's nose and leaving a portion of the cartilage in the dog's mouth. A note is taken of the owner's name that his dog's success may be rewarded in due time at the distribution of prizes.

* The particulars of this scence were given to the writer by the farmer who had been one of the boys in the chaise.

Three or four more dogs are set on in turn, and the short winter afternoon is already half over. People begin to clamour for the second bull. But they are not destined to part with the first without a little more excitement. Some young men growing bold by familiarity with the scene, take an opportunity of tossing the loose chain over the animal's back. This makes him start forward with great impetuosity, and in doing so he tears the staple out of the post to which the chain is fastened. "The Bull is loose!" Away scampers the crowd in every direction. A woman who had been selling apples and cakes out of a large basket is upset in her flight, and her wares are scattered. Several others fall over her prostrate form, but before further mischief is done, the animal is again secured. A single tree grows in the middle of the market-place. In the boughs a number of small boys, early in the day, had taken up their position, and there witnessed all the fun. Not knowing how else to secure the bull while the staple in the post is undergoing repair, the men pass the chain round this tree. The bull, finding itself thus robbed of a liberty which just now had seemed to offer a prospect of escape from his tormentors, frantic with rage and

terror, makes wild rushes forward, jerking and swaying the tree to the great alarm of the urchins in the boughs. The crowd enjoying their fright, cry out to increase it, "the tree is coming down." This is too much for the boys' courage, down they come like apples in a gale of wind, some on the bull's back, some in the slush and mud. The whole crowd except a few anxious parents, is convulsed with laughter. Luckily the boys are got out of the way of the bull, who seems fairly puzzled at this new form of attack, and no one is seriously hurt. *

It is now determined to dismiss the bull to the neighbouring slaughter-house. The poor creature is led away, covered with blood, and foam, and sweat, a very picture of distress and exhaustion, and of the madness that comes of fear, rage, and pain.

The second bull is coming out fresh and strong, and good to keep up the sport for another hour or two. But we have seen enough, and may well return to Reading with our young friend who has been looking on from the window. The light is already failing. It is damp and chill, and will be

* The description of this scene is taken partly from an old picture, and partly from the narrative of an eye-witness.

dark before he reaches home. It is well, too, to escape the rough horse-play which grows rougher as the day closes. Already there have been several fights among the dog-owners and others, and before the night is over there will be many more, and not impossibly lives may be lost. Even the lives of women were not always safe after the passions of men had been roused by these scenes of cruelty, sustained by a free flow of the drink, which makes men "full of quarrel and offence." Witness the Parish Registers, where we find the entry, "Martha May, aged 55, (who was hurt by fighters after Bull-baiting) was buried Dec. 31st 1808." Poor Martha May! she must have been badly hurt, and only lived six days, as we reckon, (allowing four days for the interval between her death and burial), after her last bull-baiting on St. Thomas's Day in Wokingham Market Place in 1808.

There remains one other point on which information is needed. The dogs were evidently highly trained. Knowing quite well what was expected of them, eagar as grey-hounds with the quarry in view to escape from the master's hand, and to fly through the hoops at the bull's nose. Where and how did they get their training?

There are still old inhabitants in Wokingham who can answer this question by word of mouth. For weeks before the baiting, on every moonlight night, it was common practice for a party of men with three or four dogs to visit some field or park, and there driving an ox, which they had before noted as suitable for their purpose, into a corner of the field, set on their dogs in order, according to the received rules of baiting. In the morning the owner would be furious at finding his best ox in a pitiable condition, and useless for the market for months to come. But so general was the interest in bull-baiting that he got no more pity than the farmer's wife, whose ducks are all killed by a fox, gets now from her neighbours.

Looking back on bull-baiting and similar sports, that were contemporaneous with it, and comparing them with the scenes of violence that formed popular entertainments in the generations that went before, and with the sports and games of our own day, the conclusion cannot be escaped that the world's history shews a well-marked line at progress in the gentler virtues, and the growth of sympathy between man and his fellow, and between man and the animals around him,

that tends to brand cruelty wherever found as a vice.

It is the duty of every one to do what he can to further this progress to quicken this growth, and to practise and encourage only those amusements which seem suitable for the developement of the best side in the character of the people.

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